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Another new mega cruise ship

This month we feature the new Norwegian Escape as Ship of the Month. Having spent a day on board the ship when she made her debut at Southampton, I was pleased to be able to see her at first hand. She had the usual array of bars, restaurants and eateries, together with spas, swimming pools and a jogging track round the upper decks. The cabins – or should that be staterooms? – were very nice, and everything was pretty much as I expected. There were some irritations, such as a lack of deck plans around the ship and in the lifts, making it more difficult than it needed to be to find your way around the huge vessel.

But styling her as an Escape to 'a new world of freedom' seems to be going a little far. And so I wondered what more the cruise industry can do in the way of providing new offerings to passengers on board new cruise ships? The Royal Caribbean International ships certainly seem to be leading the way, with onboard features such as the North Star proving very popular during cruises, as well as the Bionic Bar, even if this seems to be something of a gimmick.

The new 4,200-passenger NCL cruise ship Norwegian Escape: is the ship at least as important to the 'vacation' as the destinations that the ship will visit?

The focus on Norwegian Escape seems to be on dining and entertainment, with NCL's Freestyle cruising concept central to their marketing, and the ship seemed to be trying to offer something for everyone. While a week on board could be enjoyable, I doubt if it is to everyone's tastes, as the sheer number of passengers can soon fill the public spaces. But those who see the ship as the destination, with the focus on eating, drinking and relaxing, will not be disappointed, even if being at sea seems to be coincidental to the actual 'vacation'.

Nicholas Leach
Editor
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Patrick Boniface
Patrick Boniface is a freelance writer and photographer specialising in naval history; he has published a number of histories of British warships and submarines.

Gaetano Spiteri
Gaetano Spiteri, now a Security Officer around Grand Harbour, was a sailor, and has been a ship enthusiast for as long as he can remember, taking his camera with him wherever he goes to take ship photos.

Krispen Atkinson
Krispen Atkinson was brought up in Truro, near the ports of Falmouth, Penzance and Fowey, and visits to these helped to cultivate an interest in all kinds of ships, from the smallest to the largest.

Jim Shaw
Jim Shaw is a retired mechanical maintenance engineer who has always had a deep interest in ships and shipping. He has written for a wide variety of international publications.

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COVER The new cruise ship Norwegian Escape made her debut in Southampton at the end of October before crossing the Atlantic to start her cruising life in Miami. COMPANY PHOTO

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The 194,849gt Mathilde Maersk, the latest Triple E ultra large container ship, became the first of the Triple E class to call at Southampton when she visited on 28 October 2015. She is the last of the 20 Trple E vessels ordered by Maersk Line from Daewoo Shipbuilding & Marine Engineering in 2011. MARITIME PHOTOGRAPHIC

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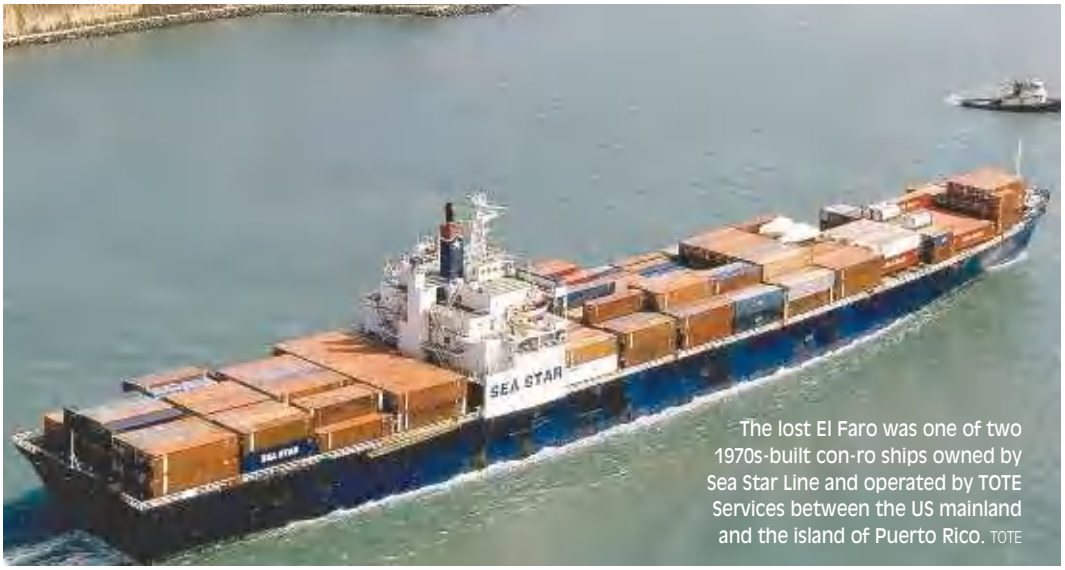
Veterans going strong

EUROPEAN FERRIES

Croatian state-owned ferry operator Jadrolinija continues to operate three out of four Škovacera class landing craft ferries built by Titovo Brodogradilište, Kraljevica for the Company between 1969 and 1971. The name literally translates as 'dust bin' and reflects their ability to scoop up loads over a wide bow, which overhangs the keel to facilitate shallow water berthing. The 48m craft can accommodate 30 cars on open decks and 200 passengers in rear saloons, which have been heavily refurbished. Lošinjanka (1969), Pelješcanka (1971), and Soltanka (1971) remain in service. The fourth and unrefurbished vessel Krcanka (1970) was retired in 2013. MD

ABOVE The 43-year-old ferry Soltanka departing Trogir for the islands of Drvenik Mali and Drvenik Veli. MATT DAVIES

US ship lost off Bahamas



The lost El Faro was one of two 1970s-built con-ro ships owned by Sea Star Line and operated by TOTE Services between the US mainland and the island of Puerto Rico. TOTE

SINKING

The US Navy ocean tug USNS Apache has been directed to the waters off Crooked Island in the Bahamas to search for the 31,515gt Con-Ro ship El Faro, which was lost with all hands during hurricane Joaquin on October 1.

Built in 1975 at Pennsylvania's Sun Shipbuilding, the American-flagged vessel was en route from Jacksonville, Florida to San Juan, Puerto Rico when the captain radioed that a scuttle had blown open and that there was water in hold number 3. He also indicated that the 737ft-long ship had lost her main propulsion unit, and that engineers could not get it going, while winds increased to 105 knots (121mph) and seas rose to over 30ft.

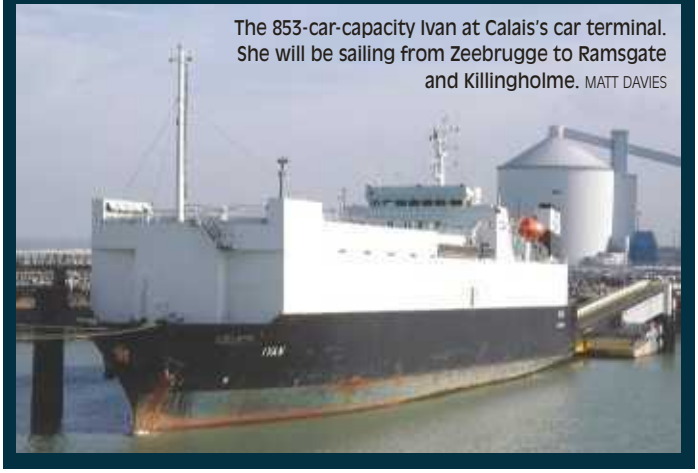
The last recorded communication from the vessel was an electronic alert sent by automated equipment at 0717 on 1 October 2015 at about 20 miles from the edge of the eye of the hurricane. The US-built cargo liner had completed the American Bureau of Shipping (ABS) class and statutory surveys in February and her annual US Coast Guard inspection in March. JS

Ramsgate back in business

PORT NEWS

Shipping is set to return to the Port of Ramsgate after a two-and-a-half year break following the end of Transeuropa Ferries' service to Ostend in April 2013, when the company went bankrupt. The port, which is owned by Thanet Borough Council, has signed a deal with PSA Peugeot Citroën's logistics company GEFCO to move the UK terminal of their Zeebrugge-Sheerness service to Ramsgate.

GEFCO imports 500,000 vehicles into the UK annually for French vehicle manufacturers and utilises the 8,191gt 1996-built car carrier Ivan to move 100,000 vehicles per year on contracted private sailings from Zeebrugge to Sheerness and Killingholme. For many years sailings have operated from Calais, but in May 2015 GEFCO switched the continental terminal to Zeebrugge citing efficiencies as being behind their decision to export French built cars out of Belgium. The move left the Calais T1 and T4 car terminals without a customer and resulted in the loss of 48 jobs. MD



The 853-car-capacity Ivan at Calais's car terminal. She will be sailing from Zeebrugge to Ramsgate and Killingholme. MATT DAVIES

Secret ship sold for scrap

The ship Hughes Glomar Explorer, built to raise a sunken Soviet submarine from the Pacific in the 1970s, has been sold for breaking.

SECRET MINING SHIP

Newer technologies and shrinking oil prices have condemned the former Hughes Glomar Explorer, a vessel built by America's Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to raise a sunken Soviet submarine in the Pacific during the 1970s, to the scrap heap.

The 619ft (189m) by 116ft (35m) ship was completed by Pennsylvania's Sun Shipbuilding and Drydock Co deceptively as a deep water mining vessel for billionaire Howard Hughes in 1973, but embarked upon its mission to raise the lost Soviet G-II submarine K-129 in 1974. Carried out under the code name 'Project Azorian', the mission was only partially successful as two-thirds of the submarine broke off during hoisting operations.

After languishing in lay-up for two decades, the vessel was converted into a drilling ship, capable of drilling in waters over 7,500ft (2,300m) deep, at Mobile, Alabama in 1997. She was then leased by the US government to Global Marine Drilling under the name GSF Explorer until sold to Switzerland's Transocean Inc in 2010 for $15 million. Earlier this year she was sold for scrap because of falling oil prices. JS

The former HSS Stena Explorer departs Holyhead under tow, destined for Turkey on 1 November 2015. MARITIME PHOTOGRAPHIC

'Concorde of the Seas' departs

FAST FERRY

The last of Stena Line's decommissioned HSS 1500 high speed catamarans has departed Holyhead under tow for a new role in Turkey. Such an ominous scenario usually means beaching and then scrapping, but the former Stena Explorer's new owners say they intend to use her as a static office block based in Istanbul. Whether this actually is the case remains to be seen.

After some initial weather delays in Anglesey, the vessel, which ha sbeen renamed One World Karadeniz, was gently coaxed from her berth at Holyhead, where she has been in lay-up since finishing her operational service in September 2014, into the Bay on 1 November 2015. She was subsequently connected up stern-first to the Dutch ocean-going tug Bluster for the three-week voyage to Turkey. The stern-first tow was considered necessary as the stern is the strongest part of the vessel.

During her service with Stena Line between 1996 and 2014, Stena Explorer made almost 29,000 crossings, carrying more than 15 million passengers, three million cars and over half a million freight units on the Holyhead-Dun Laoghaire route. Her sister vessels, Stena Voyager and Stena Discovery, were scrapped in Sweden and Turkey in 2013 and 2015 respectively having served out of Stranraer and Harwich. GD

Tonnage record

SHIP CANAL

The Panama Canal set a new tonnage record in its most recent fiscal year when 340.8 million Panama Canal tons passed through the waterway, a year-on-year increase of 4.3 per cent. Container ships registered the highest total tonnage, followed by dry bulk, liquid bulk and car carriers, with liquid bulk seeing the biggest increase. Seven new liner services were introduced to the canal, helping to contribute to the record, while the car carrier segment recorded an increase of 5.2 per cent because of expanded vehicle exports from Mexico to the US East Coast. JS

ABOVE Car carriers, such as Eukor's 57,542gt Morning Celesta, helped contribute to a new tonnage record at the Panama Canal in 2015. PCA

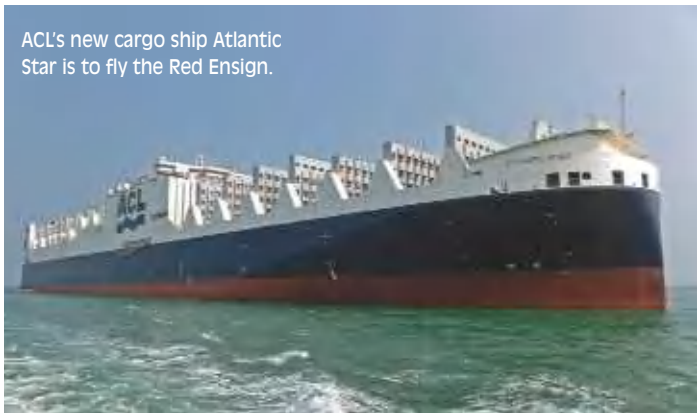
ACL to fly Red Ensign

NEWBUILD

Italian shipowner Grimaldi has confirmed that the first two new vessels for its subsidiary Atlantic Container Line (ACL) will fly the Red Ensign. This is seen as a huge vote of confidence for the UK ship register.

The five new vessels, dubbed the G4 class, were ordered in 2012 from the Chinese shipyard Hudong-Zhonghua Shipbuilding of Shanghai, with construction started in late 2013. Once delivered, the new multipurpose ships will be the largest of their kind. ACL's current vessels are flagged in Sweden, but the company has been considering a switch to the Red Ensign.

Emanuele Grimaldi, joint managing director of the Naples-headquartered company, revealed his intention to flag the first pair of ACL ships in the UK at a reception at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in London. The size of the UK register has been shrinking, but the government has made a commitment to actively seek more tonnage. In terms of tonnage, the French container line CMA CGM is the largest operator of vessels, with 40 vessels now flying the Red Ensign, including its latest vessels. AM



ACL's new cargo ship Atlantic Star is to fly the Red Ensign.

BRIEF NEWS

NORTHERN LIGHTS • The 2016 Northern Lighthouse Board's calendar is now available. It has some outstanding photographs of lighthouses in Scotland and the Isle of Man, and costs £10.50, including UK postage, £12.50 for Europe or £15 for rest of the world; cheques payable to Northern Lighthouse Board, and sent to The Information Officer, NLB, 84 George Street, Edinburgh EH2 3DA.

ST PETER LINE • Chinese company Maorui Capital is reportedly set to acquire a 25 per cent stake in St Peter Line for €200 million. At present, St Peter Line provide Baltic connections from Stockholm and Helsinki to Tallinn and St Petersburg with Princess Maria (1981/34,093gt) and Princess Anastasia (1986/37,583gt), which both previously spent time on UK routes. The Chinese investment is expected to spark considerable expansion through to 2020, with six vessels likely to be added. RP

JAPAN'S FIRST LNG TUG • Japan's NYK Group has taken delivery of the country's first LNG-powered tugboat, the 37.2m by 10.2m Sakigake, from compatriot builder Keihin Dock Co Ltd. Powered by twin Niigata 6L28AHX-DF engines, the 272gt vessel is to be employed by Wing Maritime Service Corporation at the port of Yokohama, where LNG will be supplied by Tokyo Gas and delivered by tanker truck.

PURE-GAS ENGINE • Rolls-Royce and Spanish energy company Gas Natural Fenosa are to develop and install a pure-gas Bergen C26:33 L6 AG auxiliary engine on the Baleària-operated ferry Abel Matutes (2010/29,670gt, pictured). The agreement gives Rolls-Royce its first contract for a pure-gas engine installation on a European-flagged ferry operating outside of Norwegian waters. JS

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Cammell Laird wins contract

RESEARCH SHIP

Cammell Laird shipyard in Birkenhead has beaten global competition to win the contract to build a new £200 million polar research ship in what is a major boost to shipbuilding and jobs in the North West. The new state-of-the-art £200 million research ship will operate in Antarctica and the Arctic.

The Government announced on 12 October 2012 that Cammell Laird had been selected as the preferred bidder to build the polar research ship, which will be used for climate and ocean research. The decision follows a 12-month competitive tender process. The shipyard is expected to start work in autumn 2016, and the new contract is expected to secure 400 jobs at Cammell Laird. The new ship will be able to operate for up to 60 days in sea ice gathering data.

ABOVE An impression of the new Polar research vessel is expected to be ready for operation by 2019.

Nedlloyd name to disappear

COMPANY NEWS

Nedlloyd, a historic name in the container industry for the last 40 years, could soon disappear. In September 2015 Maersk Line redelivered the 5,936TEU Nedlloyd Barentsz back to its Greek owner's Tecnomar Shipping, who then renamed her Marco R. Barentsz, along with the four other Tasman class sister ships P&O Nedlloyd Tasman, P&O Nedlloyd Drake, P&O Nedlloyd Mercator, P&O Nedlloyd Hudson, were all built during 2000 and remain the largest containerships built in Germany.

The original company was formed in 1970 by the merger of Koninklijke Rotterdamsche Lloyd, Koninklijke Java-China-Paketvaart-Lijnen, Scheepvaartmaatschappij, Stoomvaart Maatschappij Nederland, and Vereenigde Nederlandsche. The company was named Nederlandsche Scheepvaart Unie (NSU). In 1977 NSU became Koninklijke Nedlloyd Groep NV, 'Royal Nedlloyd Group'.

On 9 September 1996 Royal Nedlloyd and the British shipping company P&O Containers formed P&O Nedlloyd which, at its peak, had a fleet of around 156 owned and chartered container vessels with a combined capacity of around 428,000TEU. In April 2006 A. P. Møller Mærsk completed its acquisition of P&O Nedlloyd. After the acquisition the majority of the P&O Nedlloyd vessels were given Maersk names.

The five Tasman vessels and seven Nedlloyd Asia/Hong Kong class vessels were all repainted Maersk blue, with Nedlloyd Barentsz the first vessel to receive the new colours. With the redelivery of Nedlloyd Barentsz this leaves just one vessel with the Nedlloyd name, the 1,055TEU Nedlloyd De Liefde. AM

Seen in Southampton in Febuary 2007 just after receiving her Maersk Line livery, the container ship Nedlloyd Barentsz has just been return to her owners and renamed Marco R. ANDREW MCALPINE

St Christopher to sail again

FERRY REACTIVATED

Red Star Ferries has bought former Moroccan-owned vessel Ibn Batouta (1991/ 12,711gt), originally Sealink's Dover-based St Christopher, to strengthen its joint Adriatic service with European Ferries linking Durres and Vlore in Albania with Brindisi.

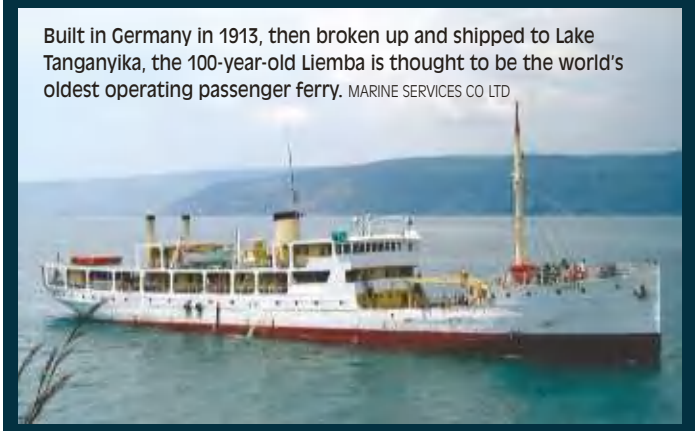
One of four former Comarit-Comanav vessels sold at auction in Spain last June, she came originally from a series built for Sealink by Harland and Wolff at Belfast, and served Dover-Calais before moving to the Irish Sea as Stena Antrim. She then ran between Newhaven and Dieppe for P&O-Stena Line until 1998.

A major refurbishment is to take place at Bijela Adriatic Shipyard in Montenegro before the 1,300-pax/290-car vessel joins a line-up including veteran Red Star 1 (1965/5,762gt, ex-Viking III). European Ferries use another one-time Northern European vessel, European Voyager (1974/9,089gt), built for Lion Ferry. RP

Ibn Batouta awaiting renovation after acquisition by Red Star Ferries.

Ancient steamer survey

Built in Germany in 1913, then broken up and shipped to Lake Tanganyika, the 100-year-old Liemba is thought to be the world's oldest operating passenger ferry. MARINE SERVICES CO LTD



SHIPS IN AFRICA

Nine ancient ships on African lakes that fall under the jurisdiction of Tanzania have had marine surveys carried out to determine their seaworthiness after a number of accidents. The mandatory surveys were ordered by Tanzania's Ministry of Transport and covered all passenger vessels, particularly those 25 years old or older, including several operating between Tanzania and the island of Zanzibar.

The ships surveyed included the elderly Liemba, built in 1913 as Graf von Goetzen, as well as the motor vessels Serengeti, Butiama, Songea, Iringa, Maendeleo, Flying Horse and Victoria. The 53-year-old Victoria is the biggest passenger ship operating on Africa's Lake Victoria and can carry 1,200 passengers and 200 tons of cargo. The surveys found that most of the vessels are capable of operating for another five years after some rehabilitation work. JS

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BRIEF NEWS

NUMBERS UP • The 2015 summer 'Passage of the Straits' taking North African workers from Spain for summer holidays, and later returning them from Morocco and Algeria, saw numbers increase in both directions. Southbound traffic between Algeciras, Tarifa, Malaga, Motril, Almeria and Alicante, and the North African ports of Tangier Med, Tangier Ville, Al Hoceima and Nador in Morocco, Ceuta and Melilla, plus Ghazaouet, Oran and Algiers in Algeria between 15 June and 15 August saw an increase of 8.74 per cent to 1,340,380 passengers.

NUMBERS DOWN • Nova Star Cruises' disappointing 2015 season continued, with lower numbers for September than the same month last year. The Yarmouth, Nova Scotia to Portland, Maine route carried 10,212 passengers, down from 11,135 in 2014. Although bookings from the United States increased, a significant drop by Canadians sailing from Yarmouth is blamed on a decline in the value of the CAN$.

ANNIVERSARY • It is 25 years since Jahre Line and Norway Line were rebranded as Color Line. Fred. Olsen ferry operations were also acquired, and in 1998 Larvik Line joined the group. Color Line now plans to replace veteran Sandefjord-Stromstad route ferry Bohus (1971/9,149gt). Originally Prinsessan Desiree, the vessel undertook Irish Sea charters for Sealink and B+I Line in the early 1980s.

Brittany Ferries report growth

Baie de Seine approaching Portsmouth. MARITIME PHOTOGRAPHIC

ENGLISH CHANNEL

All Brittany Ferries routes saw growth through the financial year 2014-15, with passenger activity up 5.5 per cent on the previous 12 months, this increase of more than 130,000 passengers bringing the total to the end of September to 2,568,000.

The introduction of the former Sirena Seaways (2003/22,382gt) as Baie de Seine added capacity from Portsmouth to Spain and Le Havre, the vessel joining Étretat (2008/26,904gt) to expand the lower cost, no-frills 'Economique' brand successfully introduced in 2014. Services to ports in Normandy from Portsmouth and Poole also gained extra traffic as a result of various spells of disruption affecting services between Calais and Dover.

Brittany Ferries, now operating ten French-flagged ships, also reported that freight, which represents 20 per cent of total company sales, grew by 21 per cent, the equivalent of 32,000 units. Because of this positive situation and the current market outlook, Brittany Ferries say they will hire 400 extra permanent staff through the financial year of 2015-2016.

New Clipper Incats arrive on Thames

RIVER THAMES

Thames Clippers' new 150-seat Incats arrived on 19 October 2015, with heavy-lift vessel Antje passing through Tower Bridge at the end of a 15,000-nautical-mile delivery journey from Hobart, Tasmania before berthing alongside HMS Belfast in London's Upper Pool.

After being named, Galaxy Clipper by Annamarie Phelps, vice chair of the British Paralympic Association, and Neptune Clipper by rower Charlotte Taylor, the craft were craned into the water to bring the Thames Clippers fleet up to 15 catamarans.

Starting in 1999 with one boat, Thames Clippers carried a record 3.8 million passengers in 2014 and were on course to top 4.3 million passengers by the end of 2015, with services from Putney in the west and Woolwich Arsenal in the east to piers in Central London, together with a River Bus Express service to connect with events at the O2.

Clipper's first newbuildings since 2008 are designed to cope with the unique Thames tidal conditions through Central London, and will be able to pass beneath the many river bridges at all water levels. Along with other fleet members, they have wheelchair access and also carry cycles.

Galaxy Clipper on the river Thames for the first time, 19 October 2015.

FERRIES IN THE NEWS . . . FERRIES IN THE NEWS . . . FERRIES IN THE NEWS . . . FERRIES IN THE NEWS . . . FERRIES IN T

SNAV ADRIATICO • Darren Holdaway saw the one-time Koningin Beatrix (1986/31,190gt) arriving in Mahon, Menorca during a summer 2015 charter to Acciona Trasmediterranea, filling a gap left by the fire-damaged ro-pax Sorrento (20043/25,984gt).

BAHAMA MAMA • The Balearia-owned 1,000-passenger/125-car former SF Alhucemas (2009/20,238gt) returned to Spain to run a new service to Morocco after proving too large for a Caribbean run from Port Everglades to Nassau. Her replacement on the Bahamas link is Pina del Rio (1982/3,454gt), the 74m Incat built as Patricia Olivia for Swedish summer Nynashamn-Visby service and winter work operating across the River Plate between Montevideo and Buenos Aires for Buquebus.

TYCHO BRAHE • The double-ended ferry delivered from Norway in 1991, with space for 1,250 passengers and 240 cars, was part of a Scandlines fleet that carried 2.6 million passengers between Helsingor, Denmark and Helsingborg, Sweden in the third quarter of 2015.

KATEXPRESS 3 • Incat is to build a large fast wave-piercing passenger and vehicle ferry for Mols-Linien of Denmark. Due in late May 2017, KatExpress 3, Incat hull 088, will carry 1,000 passengers and 430 cars and join 112m Incats KatExpress 1 (2009) and KatExpress 2 (2013) on services from Aarhus and Ebeltoft to Odden. Mols-Linien's smallest ferry, Max Mols, a 91m Incat built in 1998, is expected to be sold when the new craft arrives from Incat's Hobart, Tasmania headquarters.

Condor Liberation arriving at St Peter Port, passing the small cruise ship Le Boreal, in April 2015. TONY RIVE

Liberation report published

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Condor Ferries' new 102m trimaran received a clean bill of health in an independent report from naval engineers and architects Houlder Ltd. The exercise, jointly commissioned by the States of Jersey and Guernsey, found the 1,165-passenger/254-car Condor Liberation to be safe, stable and extremely well-suited to operating in the Channel Islands.

A team of naval architects travelled on the ship to analyse telemetry and AIS data, carry out a review of statutory documentation and, in addition to hull inspection, visited all the berths that are used by the vessel. Condor Ferries operations director Captain Fran Collins said: 'This independent verification of Condor Liberation's safety, suitability and performance is obviously very welcome. We accept all of the report's findings and will implement its recommendations.'

The report also gives throws further light on Condor Liberation's occasional large roll motions, which have been a major cause of passenger complaints. Captain Collins added: 'While these do not affect the ship's safety, we know they are disconcerting to customers and will be doing all we can to minimise their likelihood,as well as improving communications on board when they do occur.'

DFDS asked to continue

DIEPPE ROUTE

Seine-Maritime Council decided that three months is not long enough to set up a new operating structure for Transmanche Ferries, and has therefore asked present Dieppe-Newhaven route operator DFDS Seaways to continue into 2016.

The ferries Côte d'Albâtre and Seven Sisters, both 18,425gt and built in 2006, have to undergo major refits and reclassification in 2016, and this is thought to be a major reason why SMPAT (Syndicat Mixte de Promotion de l'Activité Transmanche) is not ready to take over.

With an extended Delegation of Public Service from the French regional authority, DFDS could continue for nine months, or even into 2017, to allow sufficient time for SMPAT to consider long-term costs. During 2015 the two vessels completed 1,690 crossings, compared to 1,410 crossings with a one-ship service in 2014.

Council to give support

FAST FERRY

New company High Speed Ferries is receiving support from Weymouth and Portland Borough Council as it presses ahead with plans to launch a twice-daily passenger and vehicle service to Cherbourg starting in April 2016.

Weymouth has been without a ferry link since March 2015, when Condor concentrated Channel Islands operations on Poole, with the 91m Incats Condor Express (1997) and Condor Vitesse (1998) sold to Greek operator Seajets and replaced by Condor Liberation.

Proposals paving the way for High Speed Ferries include retention of Weymouth's restricted area, with staff kept on until 31 March 2016 while negotiations continue. The operator says it expects to create around 90 jobs.

Looking to lease a ship, High Speed Ferries, who first talked of operating a Portland-Cherbourg service in 2010, say they are in discussion with a number of owners prior to the start of a three-year Weymouth contract, and estimate the service could carry around 266,000 passengers and 91,000 cars each year.

Dun Laoghaire double blow

IRISH SEA

Left without a ferry user since the high speed link with Holyhead finished in September 2014, Dun Laoghaire Harbour now looks to have no chance of tempting Stena Line back as the operator seeks planning permission to remove berthing equipment used at St Michael's Pier by HSS catamaran Stena Explorer (1996/19,638gt).

A planned 2014 Christmas period service was cancelled, with Stena Explorer remaining laid up in Holyhead as all Central Corridor emphasis was placed on the two-ship Holyhead-Dublin Port route with Stena Superfast X (2002/30/285gt) sailing since March 2015 opposite the South Korea built Stena Adventurer (2003/43,532gt).

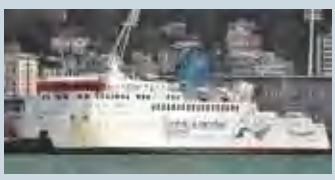
Now Stena wants to bring in contractors to remove Dun Laoghaire's East-West Walkway, Terminal Walkways and the pier's supporting steel and concrete structures. The Harbour Company's plans to invest €18 million to provide a new berth to attract the largest cruise ships also faces considerable hostility, with more than 150 objections to date.

THE NEWS . . . FERRIES IN THE NEWS . . . FERRIES IN THE NEWS . . . FERRIES IN THE NEWS . . . FERRIES IN THE NEWS . . .

CLYDE CLIPPER • The Coastal Cruising Association and PSPS Scottish Branch have a festive cruise from Greenock Victoria Harbour to Tighnabruaich on 28 December 2015. Clyde Clipper, of the Clyde Marine Services fleet, sails at 10.30. Email dshires@blueyonder.co.uk for more.

KRONPRINS FREDERIK • Scandlines are retaining the 1981-built former Great Belt train ferry on Gedser-Rostock services to allow a smooth transition as sisters Berlin and Copenhagen finally enter service. It will also cater for increased demand, with 2015 car numbers ten per cent up on 2014 and freight growing by five per cent. After rebuilding at Fayard, Denmark, Berlin was due to enter service in December 2015 and Copenhagen in early 2016. They will carry 1,300 passengers and up to 460 cars.

ARAHURA • The New Zealand Interislander ferry, built in 1983 in Denmark, passed to European interests before resale to Indian breakers, the 13,621gt vessel arriving at Alang in October 2015. She was withdrawn from the Cook Strait route on 30 July and replaced by the former Stena Alegra as Kaiarahi.



MANANNAN - The Isle of Man Steam Packet Co's fast craft finished 2015 sailings on 8 November 2015, but instead of going to the Alexandra Dock, Liverpool, as in previous years, the 1998-built 96m wave-piercer is laying up in Douglas. The thinking behind the decision is that the 5,743gt Incat Manannan could be brought into service more quickly should there be problems with ro-pax Ben-My-Chree's winter service to Heysham and Birkenhead. Manannan is due back on 17 March.

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BRIEF NEWS

P&O CRUISES • P&O Cruises has added St Lucia as a departure port for Britannia's 2016/17 Caribbean cruise programme, thus allowing seven-day itineraries from Barbados to St Lucia and vice versa.

AMERICAN CRUISE LINES • The operator of US East Coast, Alaska and the Mississippi, Snake and Columbia rivers has ordered its largest coastal cruise ship to date from Chesapeake Shipbuilding in Maryland. The new ship will carry 170 passengers and is expected in January 2017.

CRYSTAL CRUISES • The latest addition to the fleet, the 62-passenger Crystal Esprit (1989/3,341gt), will be named in the Seychelles on 20 December 2015 by Lady Gaenor Meakes.

ROYAL CARIBBEAN • Splendour of the Seas (1996/69,472gt) suffered a minor engine room fire on 22 October 2015 while bound for the Greek port of Argostoli. Passengers occupying cabins on the lower deck were mustered, but the fire was quickly extinguished.

SAIMAA TRAVEL • The totally unsuccessful summer 2015 deployment in Denmark of Brahe (1943/1,105gt), which was laid up for much of the time, ended in October with the ship's return to Finland. The ship's certificates were not valid for international voyages and the domestic sailings offered were not well supported.

CELEBRATION CRUISE LINE • Bahamas Celebration (1981/35,855gt) arrived at Alang for scrapping on 14 October. In October 2014 the ship hit a submerged object off Freeport and was beyond economic repair.

PORT NEWS • Scotland's most northerly mainland commercial port, Scrabster Harbour, has enjoyed a good 2015 season. The harbour welcomed six cruise ships this summer, bringing more than 3,200 passengers, including Amadea which arrived on 8 September 2015 from Reykjavik, Iceland.

Focus on expansion in China

Costa Fortuna is just one of many ships expected to be heading east in the next few years. WILLIAM MAYES

CARNIVAL CORP

The fourth ship in the Royal Princess series (P&O Cruises' Britannia is the third) will be named Majestic Princess and will become Princess Cruises' first totally new ship for the Chinese market. Princess Cruises have had the experience of operating Sapphire Princess seasonally in China for the past two years, but the new ship will be based in Shanghai year-round.

Internal alterations are likely to include enlarged casinos and enhanced top-end shopping opportunities, both popular with Chinese passengers. Majestic Princess will cater for 3,600 passengers, offering a range of oriental and western cuisine experiences, together with a comprehensive entertainment programme that will include all of the usual Princess features, plus Princess Class, which will, as the company puts it, 'enrich the travel experience'.

Costa pioneered big ship cruising for the Chinese, starting in 2006 with a single ship. The company now claims to have carried more than a million Chinese passengers and will have four ships in the market in 2016, including the latest addition Costa Fortuna. The company, becoming more ambitious, has recently completed its first world cruise for Chinese passengers and will include a 46-day South Pacific cruise in 2016.

In addition, parent company Carnival Corporation announced that both Carnival Cruise Lines and Aida Cruises will be joining Princess and Costa in China in 2017, each with a single ship initially. Later, during the visit of the Chinese President to London, Carnival Corporation and plc seem to have reached an agreement, in conjunction with China State Shipbuilding Corporation and China Investment Corporation, to set up a completely new domestic Chinese cruise line.

Away from Carnival, MSC will position the recently lengthened MSC Lirica as its first ship in China in May 2016, and NCL will adapt and rename Norwegian Bliss, currently under construction at Papenburg, for China in 2017.

The Chinese cruise market has seen a spectacular growth over the past few years, leading to current predictions that passenger numbers will hit 4.5 million by 2020. If that is the case, there will be many more ships heading east in the coming years, and undoubtedly some we will never see in the west.

Artist's impression of the new ship for Saga. SAGA CRUISES

First ever newbuild ship for Saga

SAGA

After much speculation and anticipation, Saga Shipping has finally ordered a new ship. This will be the first purpose-built cruise ship for the company in the almost 20 years that it has been operating its own ships. Saga's first ships, Saga Rose and Saga Ruby, appear to have influenced the design of the new vessel, the artist's impressions of which present an elegant, almost traditional profile, including an attractive funnel, the colours reverting to those of the first Saga Ships, apparently in response to passengers' requests.

The 234m ship will be delivered in 2019 from the Meyer shipyard at Papenburg and will accommodate almost 1,000 passengers. This is something of an increase over the current maximum of the company's largest ship, Saga Sapphire, which takes a little over 700 passengers. There is an option for a second of these 55,900-ton cruise ships for delivery in 2021.

Saga will include around 80 cabins for single occupancy in the all-balcony design, and will continue to offer single seating dining, and, it is to be hoped, a full walk-around promenade deck, something that is lacking on both of the current ships, but which is very popular on Saga Rose and Saga Ruby, as well as a good forward viewing lounge. The ship will feature both indoor and outdoor pools.

Fleet expansion by P&O 'down under'

Statendam was recently refitted to become Pacific Eden. RICK FRENDT

P&O AUSTRALIA

On 23 October 2015 Holland America Line's Statendam arrived at Singapore's Sembawang shipyard for her transformation into P&O Australia's Pacific Eden. Statendam disembarked her final Holland America passengers earlier in the day at the Singapore Cruise Terminal. She was joined at the shipyard on 31 October by her sister, Ryndam, which emerged on 12 November as Pacific Aria, and sailed directly to Sydney for the dual naming ceremony on 25 November.

Pacific Eden sailed from Singapore on 3 November, making her way to Sydney via Fremantle and Southern Australian ports. Holland America Line will have sistership Maasdam in Australia from November 2016, replacing the slightly larger Volendam.

In May 2017 the P&O Australia fleet will be expanded further with the transfer of Dawn Princess (1997/77,441gt) from Princess Cruises, bringing the fleet up to six ships. No name has yet been announced for Dawn Princess, but she will become the largest unit operating for the company.

More of the same

CELEBRITY CRUISES

One of the features of the four Millennium class has been their ocean liner-themed restaurants, but that is all about to change as the Tuscan Grille, introduced on the Solstice class, is extended across the mainstream fleet.

The refits are taking place at the Grand Bahama Shipyard, with Celebrity Infinity's completed and that of Celebrity Summit taking place in March 2016. Infinity has a SS United States-themed extra tariff restaurant, while that on Summit has an SS Normandie theme.

There is no word currently on the Ile de France restaurant on Celebrity Constellation or the Olympic restaurant on Celebrity Millennium, but with the perceived need for standardisation, those, too, are likely to go before long. It has been said that the displaced etched glass screens from United States' first class ballroom will be relocated within the ship, as will the other memorabilia.

Island Escape has cruised her last for Thomson. RICK FRENDT

Escape at end of road

THOMSON CRUISES

After a long and varied career, it appears that Island Escape has completed her last cruise for Thomson, at the end of October 2015. She does not currently feature in the 2016 schedules.

Built for DFDS in 1982 as Scandinavia, the 40,711gt ship entered service for Scandinavian World Voyages as a car ferry sailing between New York and the Bahamas as part of a complicated arrangement to transport cars and passengers from the North East United States to the sunshine of Florida. Passengers had to change to another ship in the Bahamas due to limitations imposed by the Jones Act.

As a result, the service was unsuccessful, so much so that the mighty DFDS was in financial difficulties for a while. Scandinavia came to Europe in 1984 and operated briefly between Copenhagen and Oslo before being sold to Sundance Cruises, who had her refitted and renamed Stardancer for operation on the west coast of the USA.

Royal Caribbean acquired her in 1990 and replaced the car deck space with cabins. She sailed for them as Viking Serenade until 2002, when she transferred to Island Cruises, a joint venture with First Choice Travel of the UK, and was renamed Island Escape. In 2009 she joined the Thomson fleet. Island Escape is a fairly high-density ship and, at the age of 33, may have limited future employment.

Thomson's fifth ship in 2016 will be a totally different class of ship from Island Escape. Thomson Discovery, currently Royal Caribbean's Splendour of the Seas, will join Thomson in the spring. During winter 2016-17 she will operate Caribbean cruises from Barbados, while Thomson Dream will continue to be based at Montego Bay and Thomson Celebration will move to Dubai.

Leaving South America

PULLMANTUR

A further sign of weakness in the Spanish-speaking South American cruise market is the decision to move Empress from the Pullmantur fleet and back into the Royal Caribbean International fleet. She will be replaced by Monarch, which is currently operated by Pullmantur year-round in the Caribbean. That would give Pullmantur an extra 800 beds in its European market, largely focussed on Spain.

Empress was built in France in 1990 for Admiral Cruises as Future Seas, but after that company was taken over by Royal Caribbean the ship was delivered as Nordic Empress. She later became Empress of the Seas and was transferred to Pullmantur in 2008, becoming Empress.

With a gross tonnage of 48,563, she is much smaller than the 73,937gt of the one-year-younger Monarch. Pullmantur has been a subsidiary of Royal Caribbean since 2006 and also operates the sisters Horizon and Zenith under its Croisieres de France brand.

It will be interesting to see how Empress of the Seas, as she is to be renamed, will be deployed in the future, but it may be no coincidence that she is just about the right size for many of Cuba's ports.

Empress will return to Royal Caribbean in 2016. PULLMANTUR

Falling Leafs, incoming Tides

RFA Orangeleaf was decommissioned on 30 September 2015. MARITIME PHOTOGRAPHIC

RFA

The last of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary's Leaf class support tankers has been retired from service, with the decommissioning of RFA Orangeleaf at Birkenhead, where she had been built 40 years earlier.

As MV Balder London, the STaT 32 products tanker was requisitioned for Operation Corporate – the Falklands War – in 1982 to transport aviation fuel from Ascension to the Falkland Islands. Two years later she was commissioned into service with the RFA and refitted with underway replenishment equipment. She saw action again in 1991, when she was involved in the first Gulf War, and in 2004 she was deployed with a French carrier battle group.

The RFA's four 'Leafs' were part of a cancelled order for John Hudson Fuel and Shipping Ltd in 1975. The company encountered financial problems and were unable to take delivery. Nevertheless, construction of the single-hulled tankers was completed by Cammell Laird, and they were subsequently acquired by the UK Ministry of Defence.

The RFA will receive the first of a new class of four fleet replenishment tankers in 2016. RFA Tidespring (A136) was officially named at Okpo in South Korea on 7 October 2015. After the ship is handed over, an RFA crew will undertake a six-week delivery voyage via the Panama Canal to Falmouth for the fit of military equipment.

Canadian crossroads

CANADIAN NAVY

HMCS Athabaskan, the flagship of Canada's Atlantic fleet, required an impromptu week-long visit to Portsmouth for engine repairs during October. The 43-year-old destroyer was sidelined earlier in the year with hull cracks and various other engine issues. Having pulled out from one major NATO exercise for an engine change by a mobile team sent from Canada, the ageing warship returned to sea to join another, Exercise Trident Juncture.

The two-part exercise, NATO's biggest since 2002, took place in Italy, Portugal and Spain over a five-week period during October and November. Primarily designed to test the NATO Response Force (NRF) in the event of a crisis, the timely manoeuvres were also used to help set up the enhanced Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) ahead of it becoming fully operational. The VJTF is a response to emerging security challenges posed by Russia, as well as the risks identified in both the Middle East and North Africa.

HMCS Athabaskan is one of 60 ships taking part in the biggest NATO exercise for more than a decade. MARITIME PHOTOGRAPHIC

Russia's double blitz

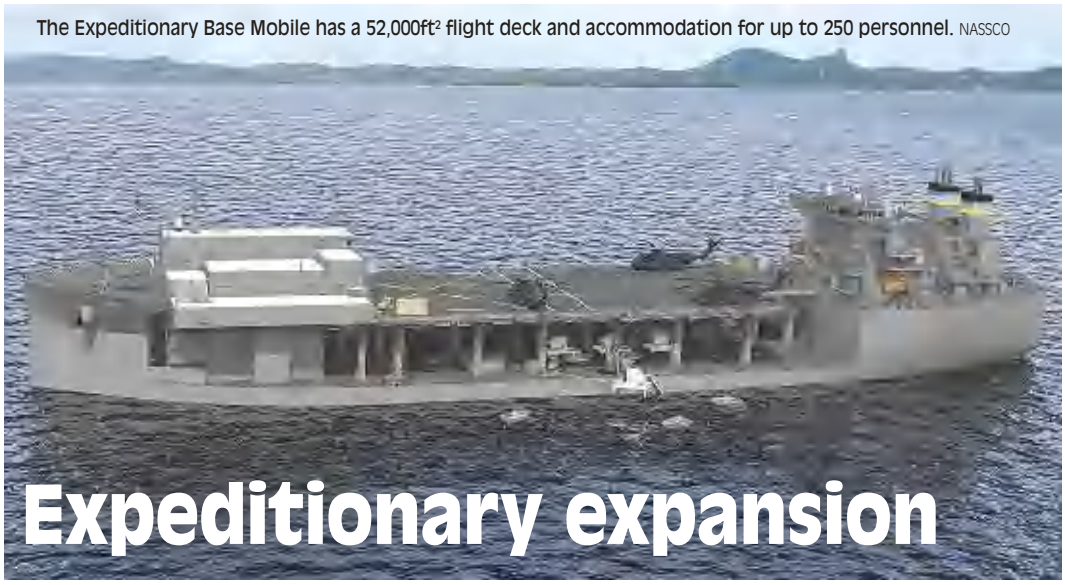
The Buyan-M class corvette Grad Sviyazhsk fires a Kalibr missile.

RUSSIAN NAVY

Russia has ably demonstrated its long-range cruise missile capability for the first time, with strikes against targets in Syria. Between them, the Gepard class frigate Dagestan and Buyan-M class corvettes Uglich, Grad Sviyazhsk and Veliky Ustyug launched 26 Kalibr cruise missiles from the land-locked Caspian Sea. The missiles travelled almost 1,500km, passing through both Iranian and Iraqi air space, with pre-strike approval granted by both countries, en route to their targets.

Although four of the missiles are reported to have crashed in Iran, Russia's measured display of strategic firepower from ships displacing less than 1,000 tonnes has not only landed significant blows against their intended targets but, more significantly, produced an effective piece of propaganda for the beleaguered Putin.

The Americans and their allies will not only be surprised by the reach of the Caspian Flotilla, but alarmed by the now-proven operational capability of the Russian equivalent of the US Tomahawk, dubbed the 'carrier killer', which is freely available for export.



The Expeditionary Base Mobile has a 52,000ft² flight deck and accommodation for up to 250 personnel. NASSCO

Expeditionary expansion

US NAVY

The General Dynamics NASSCO shipyard in San Diego, California has started construction of a second Expeditionary Base Mobile Ship for the US Navy. The vessel, to be named USNS Hershel W. Williams (ESB 2), is similar to USNS Lewis B. Puller (ESB 1), developed from the Mobile Landing Platforms, USNS Montford Point (ESD 1) and USNS John Glenn (ESD 2).

The new ship is intended to support a range of forward-based missions, including Air Mine Counter Measures, counter-piracy operations, maritime security operations, humanitarian aid and disaster relief missions, and US Marine Corps crisis response. It will also provide operating and maintenance facilities for MH-53, MH-60 helicopters and MV-22 tilt rotor aircraft.

The ships were all recently reclassified to streamline the fleet with more conformative names. As such, the Mobile Landing Platforms are now known as Expeditionary Transfer Docks (ESD) and the Afloat Forward Staging Base (AFSB) are now Expeditionary Base Mobile (ESB). The E designation for expeditionary vessels is also applied to the Austal-built Joint High Speed Vessel (JHSV), which will now be known as Expeditionary Fast Transport (EPF).

US focus on frigates

US NAVY

With the last of the navy's Oliver Hazard Perry class frigates being decommissioned in September 2015, the US Navy has effectively called time on the Littoral Combat Ship concept in favour of a traditional frigate design. The next phase of the LCS programme will focus on improving the lethality and survivability of the existing designs. Both hull variants are likely to be kept, although some features, such as the crane and stern mission bay doors, will be eliminated to save weight for other add-ons like armour plating and missiles.

To increase potency, the upgraded vessels will feature an over-the-horizon missile system, a SeaRAM anti-ship missile system and a ship-launched Hellfire missile system, all managed by the Lockheed Martin Combat Management System Component Based Total Ship System – 21st Century (COMBATSS-21). They will also have a permanent torpedo decoy and variable depth sonar and multi-function towed array.

Finland's corvette quest

FINNISH NAVY

The Finnish Defence Ministry has authorised plans for the procurement of new warships. The so-called 'Squadron 2020' project aims to replace four Rauma class Fast Attack Craft and two Hämeenmaa class Minelayers with four multi-purpose corvettes.

With an ambitious requirement to provide anti-air, anti-submarine and anti-shipping capabilities, even in winter ice conditions, and also the ability to contribute to international missions, the new ships are likely to be the largest ever to be built for the Finnish Navy.

Subject to parliamentary approval the programme budget will be set in the region of €1.2 billion, despite aggressive public spending cuts. The project planning phase is expected to last until 2018 with construction at a Finnish shipyard anticipated to take place between 2019 and 2024.

The project could yet involve other Nordic nations. The defence ministers of Sweden, Norway, Finland, Denmark and Iceland have already agreed on closer co-operation in response to Russian aggression. Finland, which borders Russia, and Sweden are not members of NATO, but have also improved links with the transatlantic alliance.

An impression of how Finland's 'Squadron 2020' corvettes may look.

BRIEF NEWS

EGYPTIAN NAVY • The French government has agreed to sell two Mistral assault ships, which were originally ordered by Russia, to its new best customer. The price paid for the helicopter carriers was not revealed. France is thought to have lost up to €250 million on the ships, having already refunded €950 million to Moscow for the failed contract.

BRAZILIAN NAVY • The Marinha do Brasil is down to eight frigates following the decommissioning of Bosísio, after a total 33 years' service with two navies, on 29 September. The former HMS Brazen was one of four Batch 1 Broadsword class ships transferred to Brazil between 1995 and 1997. Like Dodsworth (ex-HMS Brilliant) before her, Bosísio is to be scrapped. The first of class, Greenhalgh (ex-HMS Broadsword), and Rademaker (ex-HMS Battleaxe) remain operational.

PAKISTANI NAVY • Pakistan has finalised a deal for the procurement of eight diesel-electric cruise missile submarines with China. Details of the agreement remain sketchy, but it is known that construction of the vessels is to be divided equally between shipyards in both countries. The vessels are thought to be the S-20 export derivative of the Type 039A/Type 041 Yuan class submarine, equipped with air-independent propulsion. The expansion of Pakistan's underwater capabilities is in direct response to India's move towards nuclear-powered subs.

IRISH NAVAL SERVICE • The latest government defence White Paper has confirmed the requirement for a minimum eight-ship fleet as Ireland looks to play an increasing role on the international stage. The current flagship, LÉ Eithne, is to be replaced by a helicopter-capable multi-role vessel, along with the Coastal Patrol Vessels, LÉ Ciara and LÉ Orla. The replacements are to be equipped with counter-mine and counter-IED capabilities.

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Capesizers disposed of

BULKERS

Denmark's D/S Norden, a major operator of dry bulk tonnage, has elected to leave the capesize sector of the market because of the slowdown in China. Although it controls a fleet of nearly 250 ships, only three of these are capesize: Nord Energy, Nord Steel and Nord Power, all of about 180,000dwt, and now to be sold. The company is also contemplating leaving the post-Panamax market, where it operates eight ships. Capesize bulk carriers, which once earned $200,000 a day before the 2007-09 financial crisis, have only been earning about $9,000 per day in the current market. JS

ABOVE The 2004-built Nord Energy is one of three capesize ships to be disposed of by Norden. D/S NORDEN

Looking sharp

Brightly painted, the 57,807dwt bulk carrier Global Vega is one of a growing number of ships being built by Tsuneishi Heavy Industries in the Philippines, helping to make that country the world's fourth largest shipbuilder. THICI

NEWBUILD

A ship never looks as good as when she is newly delivered, and such is the case with 57,807dwt bulk carrier Global Vega, built by the Tsuneishi Heavy Industries (THICI) yard at Cebu, Philippines for Japan's NYK Line.

Unfortunately, the 190m by 32.2m vessel may have a difficult time retaining her glow, as she has been placed in service transporting bulk coal from Indonesia.

However, her builder has a bright future, with over 60 booked orders stretching into 2017, and with the capability of building a vessel the size of Global Vega in about ten months. Now considered one of the largest yards in the Philippines, THICI has ten quays on its 147-hectare property and a building dock that can accommodate bulk carriers of up to 180,000dwt capacity. JS

Bulker in trouble again

CASUALTY

The Turkish-owned and -operated bulk carrier El Condor Pas was transiting the Bosphorus northbound on 9 September 2015 when she grounded near Umuryeri Point. The 177m 33,476dwt Panamanian-flagged bulker, built in Japan in 2000, was on passage from Odense, Denmark to the Black Sea port of Samsun with 29,000 tons of steel products when she grounded, reportedly having left the marked channel despite several warnings from vessel traffic services. Pilotage for a vessel of her size is not compulsory and she had not embarked a pilot for the passage.

Initial attempts to refloat the vessel were unsuccessful, but she was eventually freed on 11 September and moved to the Istanbul anchorage. On 30 July the same vessel suffered engine failure while transiting the Kiel Canal and had to be towed to Kiel, where she was detained. The vessel had also been detained in Southampton in September 2014. RC

ABOVE The Turkish-operated bulk cargo vessel El Condor Pas (2000) ran aground while transiting the Bosphorus on 9 September. SIMON SMITH

Converted to LNG

ABOVE The 10,585gt German feeder ship Wes Amelia is to be converted to burn LNG, with financing for the project to be provided by the German government. WR

FEEDER BOXBOAT

German shipowner Wessels Reederei has been given funds to convert one of its feeder container ships, the 152m by 23m Wes Amelia (2011), to burn LNG, marking the first of what could be many conversions in the company's fleet.

The German firm will work together with engine manufacturer MAN Diesel & Turbo and gas specialist TGW Marine Gas Engineering on the conversion, but said that, due to the long delivery time of the needed LNG storage tanks, the retrofit will not begin until the fourth quarter of this year.

The 10,585gt Wes Amelia has 23 sisterships, 16 of which are structurally identical, which opens up considerable options for follow-up projects once LNG becomes more readily available on European shipping routes. JS

Delmas to disappear

Delmas of France has operated a number of ships, such as the 30,453gt Nicolas Delmas, between Europe and Africa, but is to be fully absorbed into parent company CMA CGM. DELMAS

COMPANY NEWS

One of the world's oldest operating shipping companies, Le Havre-based Delmas Shipping, is scheduled to disappear into the larger CMA CGM group later this year after having been purchased by CMA CGM in 2006. The firm was founded as Delmas Freres in 1867 and operated between France and North African ports until losing two thirds of its fleet during World War I. It subsequently recovered, and expanded its services to West Africa in the 1920s, but again lost the majority of its fleet in World War II.

After hostilities ended, and under the name Société Navale Delmas Vieljeux, it continued operations with second-hand Liberty ships until it could take delivery of new tonnage in the 1950s and 1960s. In the 1970s it began acquiring a number of its competitors, including the West African services of Chargeurs Réunis and Elder Dempster, before being acquired itself by the Bolloré Group in 1991. Five years later it acquired the remaining liner activities of Chargeurs Réunis, but was taken over by CMA CGM in 2006.

Ballast water treatment

BULKERS

Canada's Fednav Limited is equipping its 12 bulk carriers under construction by Japan's Oshima shipyard with a ballast water treatment system developed by JFE Engineering Corporation. The decision to use JFE's 'BallastAce' system comes after the Canadian company tested several other systems on its operating bulk carriers. The first JFE developed system has been installed on the 34,000dwt Federal Biscay, which entered service last month. JS

ABOVE A ballast water treatment system is to be installed on bulk carriers operated by Fednav. FEDNAV

Anthony Veder expands

GAS TANKERS

The Rotterdam-based Anthony Veder Group was established in 1937 as a ship owner and port agent. Since acquiring its first gas tanker in 1969, the company has been involved in all kinds of gas shipping and now operates a fleet of 30 gas tankers, including five LNG-fuelled gas tankers.

The company is to modernise its fleet by purchasing four gas tankers from LGR di Navigazione SpA of Italy. The 4,000 CBM semi-pressurised fully refrigerated gas carriers Castel dell'Ovo (2007) and Castello di Gradara (2009) have been commercially managed by Veder since early 2015 and they will be delivered to their owners and renamed Coral Medusa and Coral Monactis respectively.

The 8,000 CBM ethylene carriers Castel Nuovo (2009) and Castel Sant'Elmo (2009) will follow after leaving the Lauritzen Kosan Pool, and will be renamed Coral Pearl and Coral Patula. All four vessels will trade in North West Europe as part of Veder's pool of gas tankers. RC

ABOVE The gas carrier Castel dell'Ovo (2007) has been purchased by the Anthony Veder Group and will be renamed Coral Medusa. SIMON SMITH

British vessel scrapped

ABOVE The former Stephenson Clarke bulk carrier Dallington has gone for recycling as Lena Koleva. She was beached at Aliaga on 29 September 2015. SIMON SMITH

BULKER

The former Stephenson Clarke bulker Dallington (1975), which was a regular sight in British Ports in the 1970s and 1980s, has gone for recycling at Aliaga, where she arrived on 28 September 2015, being beached the next day.

In April 2010 her ownership passed from Stephenson Clarke to VM International Ltd of Varna, Bulgaria, who have traded the 12,140dwt vessel under the Comoros flag. The same company also have two other former Stephenson Clarke vessels in their fleet: the smaller 11,990dwt Durrington (1981), now trading as Batya, and the ex Storrington (1982), now Silvia, both under the Bulgarian flag.

All three vessels were built at Verolme, Heusden, Netherlands. Stephenson Clarke was established in 1730 and went into liquidation in 2012. In 2008 their vessels ranged in size from Ardent, of 1,180dwt, to Dallington, which, at 12,138dwt, had the distinction of being the largest vessel they operated. RC

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Keel laid for LNG ConRo

CON-RO SHIPS

VT Halter Marine's facility at Pascagoula, Mississippi has laid the keel for the second Commitment class LNG-powered Con-Ro ship it is building for Crowley Maritime Corporation, with the first ship's keel having been laid in January 2015. Cargo capacity will be approximately 2,400TEU, with additional space for nearly 400 vehicles in an enclosed garage.

Both 219.5m by 32.2m ships have been designed to maximise the carriage of 53ft containers, which are popular in the American market, and will have a deadweight capacity of 26,500 tonnes on a draught of 10m. To be named El Coquí and Taíno, they are scheduled for delivery during the second and fourth quarter of 2017 respectively and will replace Crowley's towed triple-deck barge fleet in the Puerto Rico trade.

ABOVE Crowley is to take delivery of its two LNG ConRo ships in 2017. CROWLEY

First ethane-powered ship

The world's first ethane-powered ship, the 20,400dwt JS Ineos Insight, is carrying her shale gas message across the Atlantic. BUREAU VERITAS

GAS CARRIER

The first of a series of eight 27,500m³ capacity multi-gas Dragon class vessels being built by the Sino-Pacific yard in China for Denmark's Evergas, the 20,400dwt JS Ineos Insight, has entered service as the world's first ocean-going ethane-powered ship.

Once all eight tankers are operational, they will be transporting over 800,000 tonnes of ethane gas, stored at -90°C, each year from the US to Norway and Scotland. Although originally designed to operate on LNG and diesel, using two 1,000m³ LNG storage tanks mounted on deck, an ability to burn ethane was added to allow the vessels to use a portion of their cargo as fuel. This required extra engine room ventilation and additional gas detection equipment, plus modifications to the Wärtsilä 6L20 DF main engines that included a lower compression ratio, different turbocharger nozzles, and de-rating to cope with the lower knocking resistance of ethane.

A second tanker, JS Ineos Ingenuity, will enter service shortly carrying the message 'Shale Gas For Chemicals' on her sides and a dragon representing 'King of Water' on her LNG storage tanks.

First LNG boxboats

CONTAINER SHIPS

San Diego's General Dynamics NASSCO shipyard at San Diego, California launched the 3,100TEU Perla Del Caribe in late August 2015, the world's second LNG-powered container ship, following sistership Isla Bella, which was launched in mid-April (see SM, Nov 2015) and is now being readied for service. Both 233m by 32.3m vessels, which are powered by dual-fuel MAN 8L70ME-C8.2-GI engines to give a speed of 22 knots, will operate between Jacksonville, Florida and San Juan, Puerto Rico replacing ships El Faro and El Yunque.

ABOVE TOTE Maritime's LNG-powered container ship Isla Bella receiving her hatch covers while under construction at San Diego's NASSCO shipyard. NASSCO

Germany's first LNG vessel

LNG FERRY

Cuxhaven-based Reederei Cassen Eils is hoping to put Germany's first LNG-fuelled vessel, Helgoland, into operation after shipbuilder Fassmer-Werft missed the original delivery deadline by almost five months because of technical issues. The 83m by 12.6m dual-fuel ferry, which has a capacity for 1,180 passengers, was originally scheduled for delivery in June.

Fassmer cited technical issues caused by the complexity of technology used in the construction of LNG-powered vessels, and the time-consuming approval procedures for some of the prototype equipment used on board the vessel, particularly the LNG-powered generator sets, as the main reasons for the delay. Once delivered, Helgoland will operate between Cuxhaven and the island of Helgoland, its route taking it close to the Lower Saxon Wadden Sea national park, where it will operate primarily on LNG.

The new German ferry Helgoland is powered by two nine-cylinder Wärtsilä 20DF medium-speed dual-fuel engines, making her the first German-flagged marine vessel to operate on LNG as its primary fuel.

China building up fleet

Crude oil carriers are big ships, particularly when seen in ballast, like China Merchants Energy Shipping's new 333m by 60m New Harmony, a 320,391dwt vessel with a cargo capacity of 358,924m³, recently completed by China's Guangzhou Longxue Shipbuilding. CHINA MERCHANTS

TANKERS

China has a very large merchant fleet and is building new ships rapidly. One of the country's largest tanker operators, China Merchants Energy Shipping Company (CMES), has been taking delivery of a number of large crude carriers from compatriot shipyards. Affiliated with the well-known China Merchants Group, which traces its history back to the China Merchants Steam Navigation Company of 1872, CMES was jointly established by China's Sinopec, Sinochem, COSCO and CNOOC groups at the end of 2004 to own and operate large ocean-going tankers, as well as bulk carriers and liquefied natural gas ships.

Its fleet currently consists of 38 oil tankers of about ten million dwt total capacity, 13 bulk carriers of 1.56 million dwt total capacity and six LNG ships of 0.9 million total cubic metre capacity, or about 500,000 dwt. Additionally, 20 more vessels are on order and will be delivered before the end of 2017 to give a fleet of over 55 representing nearly 22 million dwt.

Largest all-electric ferry

FERRY

Denmark's Søby Shipyard Ltd expects to complete the world's largest all-electric ferry for operation between the island of Ærø and the mainland of Denmark by June 2017. Being built as part of Denmark's Natura project, which provides rural populations with green transportation, the 50m vessel will carry up to 25 cars and 147 passengers.

Finland's electric drive train specialist Visedo will provide the electric system for the ferry, which will incorporate a 4.2MW lithium-ion battery bank provided by Switzerland's Leclanché. The ship will reduce CO_2 emissions by 2,000 tons and NOx emissions by 41,500 kg a year on her route, while the electric propulsion system will significantly reduce both emitted noise levels and wake. Visedo says the market for marine electric vessels is expected to treble by 2023.

ABOVE A new all-electric ferry that will run to the island of Ærø. VISEDO

ABB orders cable layer

ABOVE To be built to lay high-voltage cable, ABB's new cable layer will be completed by Norway's Kleven yard for delivery in 2017. ABB

CABLE LAYER

Switzerland's ABB group has ordered a 140m by 30m cable-laying vessel from Norway's Kleven shipyard for delivery in 2017 that will be DP3 (dynamic positioning) rated and will be employed to lay high-voltage cable.

The ship will be built to a 306 CLV design furnished by Salt Ship Design of Stord, Norway and will incorporate a large number of ABB's own marine technologies, including a complete ABB Integrated Automation System and three ABB Azipod propulsion units.

Together with an onboard DC grid and power distribution system, which will use a single DC circuit for ship propulsion, the ship's fuel consumption is expected to be cut by 27 per cent compared to conventional AC systems, while three tunnel thrusters supplied by Brunvoll will aid manoeuvrability.

Small ferries for Canada

FERRY

The second of two small ferries being built by Damen Group's yard in Galati, Romania for the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has been launched under the name Legionnaire, but the first ferry of the series, the 80.9m by 17.2m Veteran, has had to be returned to the yard for the installation of a new MTU main engine after the original diesel developed problems during the vessel's transatlantic delivery voyage.

Because of this, the propulsion machinery installed in Legionnaire, which was launched by Damen in July 2015 for delivery the following month, will be thoroughly tested prior to handover. Both vessels have been built to Super A1 ice class standards for operation in Eastern Canada and are capable of carrying 200 passengers and 65 vehicles.

ABOVE Damen's yard in Romania has launched the second of two ferries it is building for the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. DAMEN GROUP

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Frisian ferries

The West Frisian Islands, a chain of islands in the North Sea off the Dutch coast at the edge of the Wadden Sea, are served by a great number and variety of different ferries, as Matt Davies explains.

FRIESLAND	
BUILT	1989, Van der Giessen-de Noord, Rotterdam
TONNAGE	3,573gt
DIMENSIONS	69m x 16m
ENGINES	Two 1,750kW
SPEED	14 knots
CAPACITY	1,350 passengers, 122 cars
ROUTE	Harlingen-Terschelling
OWNER	Rederij Doeksen

The Frisian Islands, which run from Texel in the west along the North Sea coasts of Netherlands and Germany and Denmark, form a unique group and are extremely popular tourist destinations in the summer. The East Frisian Island chain flanks the northern Dutch coast and is made up of six islands: the German Island of Borkum, which lies off the north east corner of Holland at the mouth of the Ems Estuary, and the five Dutch islands of Texel,Vlieland, Terschelling, Ameland and Schiermonnikoog.

The islands are separated from the mainland coast by the Wadden Sea a shallow intertidal body of water consisting of mudflats, trenches and wetlands. There are four principal ferry operators, each of which has a long heritage and operates different vessel types, including a number of interesting designs such as double-deck double-ended ferries, slow-speed catamarans and vessels with an open vehicle deck located above their passenger accommodation in order to raise their freeboard and minimise the effect of wave impact on the deck.

With the exception of those which run to Texel, ferry routes are subsidised and highly seasonal. Although busy with tourists during the summer, the routes are relatively quiet during the winter with services considerably reduced and lifeline in nature.

Ferry overview

The island of Texel (pronounced 'Tessel') is served from Den Helder by Texels Eigen Stoomboot Onderneming (TESO), which was founded in 1907 and operates two double-deck double-ended vessels. Vlieland and Terschelling have been served by Rederij Doeksen from Harlingen since 1908, and today three car ferries, a freight ferry and two passenger catamarans work the route. Wagenborg Passagiersdiensten, in existence since 1898,

ABOVE TESO's impressive 13,256gt Doktor Wagemaker arriving at Den Helder after the 20-minute crossing from the island of Texel. MATT DAVIES

operates four car ferries and a passenger catamaran to Ameland from Holwerd, and to Schiermonnikoog from Lauwersoog.

At the eastern corner of the Netherlands, the German company AG EMS has served the island of Borkum since 1843 and today operates sailings from the Dutch port of Eemshaven, and across the Ems Estuary from Emden in Germany. Until April 2014 a fifth West Frisian operator existed; the independently-owned EVT ran a single car ferry between Harlingen and Terschelling, controversially in direct competition with Doeksen's subsidised service.

The company was set up by islanders in 2008 in protest at Doeksen's fares and service levels and operated mainly at peak times, undercutting Doeksen considerably. However, following much legal wrangling and threats from Doeksen, a compromise was reached which saw the Dutch government buy EVT from its island owners for €9 million, and the company's vessel and crew transferred to Doeksen.

TESO and Texel

TESO operate two double-ended double-deck ferries on the four kilometre 20-minute journey between Den Helder and Horntje on the island of Texel, crossing the turbulent Marsdiep tidal race. Principal vessel is the 13,256gt *Doktor Wagemaker,* built in 2006 by Damen Schelde Naval Shipbuilding,Vlissingen, which can carry 1,750 passengers and 300 cars and operates hourly.

Her introduction saw the 1991-built *Schulpengat* relegated to TESO's secondary vessel and the older *Molengat* (1980) withdrawn. The

ABOVE The 1989-built ferry Friesland (3,583gt) arriving at Terschelling. She undertakes three round trips daily from Harlingen to the island and can carry 120 cars and 1,350 passengers. NICHOLAS LEACH

Zeesleepboot Holland

The preserved ship Holland was built for Doeksen in 1951 for a dual role of tug and summer high season ferry, carrying 700 passengers. She operated in both capacities until 1976, when she was withdrawn due to falling demand for towage and assistance with the modernisation of seafaring vessels. From 1976 to 1998 Holland was chartered to the Dutch Government Water Agency, Rijkswaterstaat, as research vessel. When she was finally withdrawn, her demolition was proposed and a public campaign to save her was started. Acquired as a museum ship in 2000, she was taken to the Den Helder Maritime Museum during the restoration work. Now marketed as the Zeesleepboot Holland, she is based at Harlingen and is operational again, undertaking regular excursions.

The secondary vessel operated by TESO is the 1991-built Schulpengat, pictured on the crossing between Den Helder and Texel. NICHOLAS LEACH

Doeksen's open deck slow speed catamaran Noord Nederland maintains freight sailings to Vlieland and Terschelling. MATT DAVIES

Oerd operated between Holwerd and Ameland for Wagenborg. Although identical to Sier, she was built eight years later. NICHOLAS LEACH

Spathoek was operated by EVT from 2012 to 2014, when she was taken over by Doeksen. She is seen departing Harlingen for Terschelling. NICHOLAS LEACH

8,311gt vessel can carry 1,750 passengers and 242 cars and operates at peak periods, increasing sailing frequency to half hourly.

A new 'eco ferry', named *Texelstroom*, is being built for TESO by LaNaval Shipyard, Bilbao for delivery in spring 2016 to replace *Schulpengat*. The new 135m double-ended double vehicle-deck vessel will carry 1,750 passengers and 350 cars, or 34 trucks and 261 cars, and will operate principally on CNG (compressed natural gas) stored in tanks on her roof. Further power will be available from hybrid electric rechargeable batteries and over 700m² of solar panels, and the vessel will also be able to operate on conventional marine diesel.

Rederij Doeksen

Rederij Doeksen's slow speed catamaran *Vlieland* crosses from Harlingen to her namesake island three times a day, making the crossing in an hour and a half. She was built by FBMA Marine, Cebu in the Philippines in 2005 and can carry 59 cars and 1,200 passengers. Her stylish contemporary interior resulted in her winning the Shippax Outstanding Ferry Lounge award of 2006. She replaced *Oost Friesland*, a close sister to *Midsland* and a former AG EMS ferry which now operates in Iceland as *Baldur*.

Friesland is more than 25 years old, having been built in 1989 for Rederij Doeksen by Van der Giessen de Noord, Krimpen aan de IJssel. Despite the proximity of Terschelling to the mainland, the crossing takes two hours due to the circuitous route taken through the shallow waters of the Wadden Sea, which, at one point, involves vessels sailing in the direction of the coast.

Midsland was built in 1974 by Cassens Werft, Emden, Germany and was originally *Rheinland* of AG EMs. She

SPATHOEK	
BUILT	1988, launched 22.4.88
TONNAGE	1,743gt
DIMENSIONS	67.84m x 12.82m x 1.95m
ENGINES	Two 1,440kW MWM
SPEED	12.5 knots
CAPACITY	975 passengers, 55 cars
ROUTE	Harlingen-Terschelling
OWNERS	Wyker Dampfschiffs Reederei (WDR)/ 2011– EVT/ 2014– Rederij Doeksen
EX NAMES	Schleswig-Holstein

was lengthened in 1980 and acquired by Rederij Doeksen in 1994. Since delivery of *Vlieland*, she has operated as a relief vessel and provides additional crossings on the Harlingen to Terschelling route during the summer peak. She can carry 55 cars and 1,200 passengers on two decks of lounges, which are located below her vehicle deck.

The majority of freight between Harlingen and Terschelling and Vlieland is carried by Doeksen's open-deck slow-speed freight catamaran *Noord Nederland*, which was built in 2002 by ASB, Harwood, New South Wales, Australia. This unusual vessel can carry 12 lorries and their drivers and, in Harlingen, operates from a dedicated freight terminal in the inner docks.

Doeksen has been awarded a €1.2 million grant towards a €3.5 million conversion of *Noord Nederland* to LNG. The project includes lengthening the vessel by 20m and conversion to carry 200 passengers, and will take place this winter. In addition, a new €25 million LNG-powered 72m slow-speed catamaran able to carry 900 passengers and 72 cars is being ordered from Damen Shipyards for delivery early in 2018. Together, the two LNG vessels will mean *Midsland* can be withdrawn and *Friesland* will be relegated to reserve vessel.

Doeksen's 50m fast passenger catamaran *Tiger* operates at 35 knots and can carry 415 passengers. She was built by FBMA Marine, Cebu, Philippines as *Jetstream* but entered service as *Supercat 2000*, before being purchased by Doeksen in 2008. She is the principal craft on the Harlingen to Terschelling passenger service, which operates four times a day in each direction with a crossing time of 45 minutes.

The Norwegian-built catamaran *Koegelwieck* is

Preserving Friesland of 1955

Friesland was built in 1955 for Rederij Doeksen and operated for the company between Harlingen and Terschelling until 1988. The vessel, which could carry 1,000 passengers and 16 cars, was sold on for river use as a party cruise vessel in the Rotterdam and Dordrecht areas. In 1996 she was sold again, this time for day cruising on the Oosterschelde estuary. In 2002 she was purchased by a charitable trust formed to acquire and preserve her for summer tourist operation on the IJsselmeer between Enkhuizen and Medemblik, where she is pictured, in conjunction with the Hoorn to Medemblik narrow gauge steam railway.

Ostfriesland of AG Ems departing Borkum on a crossing to Emden. M. DAVIES

OSTFRIESLAND	
BUILT	1985
TONNAGE	1,859gt
DIMENSIONS	78.7m x 12.6m x 2.56m
SPEED	15.5 knots
CAPACITY	1,200 passengers, 70 cars
ROUTE	Borkum-Emden
OWNER	AG Ems

Doeksen's relief passenger fast craft, normally performing relief service and operating additional crossings between Harlingen and Terschelling at peak times. The 312-seat vessel was built in 1992 for Doeksen and has been with the Dutch company ever since.

In April 2014 Rederij Doeksen took over operation of EVT and their vessel *Spathoek*. EVT (Eigen Veerdienst Terschelling – Own Ferry Service Terschelling) was set up by islanders aggrieved about the poor service levels and high fares of Doeksen, which is subsidised by the state. Operations commenced in 2008 with passenger vessel *Stortemelk*. In 2012 the 1988-built German car ferry *Schleswig-Holstein*, previously owned by Wyker Dampfschiffs-Reederei, was introduced.

Spathoek usually operated just a single round trip a day on the Harlingen to Terschelling route, with a double run in the summer. The 67m ferry can carry 975 passengers and 65 cars at a speed of 12.5 knots. Following various legal wrangles over repeated attempts to block berth access in both ports and the Dutch Government's attempt to ban EVT from operating, a deal was reached whereby EVT was purchased by the Dutch government for €9 million and absorbed by Doeksen, with islanders given a say in the running of ferry services through a user committee.

Spathoek quickly had her EVT markings painted out but continued to operate the EVT schedule under the Doeksen banner until September. *Spathoek* has now been withdrawn and laid up in Lauwersoog and is for sale, due to concerns that her low freeboard and open vehicle deck design is unsuited to year-round Wadden Sea operation.

Wagenborg

Wagenborg Passagiersdiensten's link to the island of Ameland is in the hands of identical sister vessels *Sier* and *Oerd*, which operate from Holwerd. The vessels, which each carry 72 cars and 1,200 passengers in lounges located below the vehicle deck at a speed of 10.5 knots, were built by Bijlsma Wartena, Wartena, Holland. *Sier* was built in 1995 with *Oerd* not following until 2003, eight years later.

Sailings to Ameland are planned around a single vessel operating a two-hourly service, with a crossing time of 45 minutes, supported by a second vessel at peak and holiday times.

ABOVE Doeksen's 35-knot passenger catamaran Tiger arriving at Harlingen after her 45-minute crossing from Terschelling. NICHOLAS LEACH

ABOVE Rederij Doeksen's slow-speed catamaran Vlieland heading away from Harlingen, bound for her namesake island. MATT DAVIES

Rederij Wadden Transport's solitary vessel, Terschelling Bank, berthed in Harlingen's outer harbour, from where she operates weekly freight sailings to the islands of Terschelling and Vlieland. MATT DAVIES

The former German ferry Midsland, originally Rheinland of AG Ems, departing Harlingen. MATT DAVIES

Crossings to Schiermonnikoog are operated from Lauwersoog by identical sister vessels *Rottum* and *Monnik*. Both were built by Scheepswerf Hoogezand, Hoogezand in 1985 and can carry 36 cars and 1,000 passengers at 11 knots and make the crossing in 45 minutes. A two-hourly frequency and single vessel service normally operates, supplemented by the second vessel during the summer peak to offer hourly departures.

Extra summer passenger sailings are operated by a Damen-built catamaran, the 30m 130-passenger capacity 37-knot *Esonborg* from 1999, which provides a direct link from the Esonstad holiday resort. The one-hour passage to the resort, located inland on the Lauwersmeer Lake, requires the craft to transit a lock at Lauwersoog.

AG EMS

The 1986-built *Münsterland* is operated by German operator AG EMS to the German island of Borkum, which is situated at the mouth of the river Ems, nine miles off the Dutch coast. AG EMS operates a further three car ferries: *Ostfriesland*, sister to *Münsterland*; *Helgoland*, which undertakes relief duties alongside a July and August service between Wilhelmshaven and Helgoland; and relief car ferry *Groningerland*.

In addition, a passenger catamaran, *Nordlicht*, and a passenger-only ferry *Wappen Von Borkum* are operated. *Münsterland* can carry 1,200 passengers and 55 cars and generally operates the Dutch service, making three or four round trips a day, with a crossing time of 50 minutes.

The 1,860gt *Ostfriesland* normally operates two daily round trips on AG EMS' longer route from Emden, located upstream on the Ems estuary, to Borkum and has a crossing time of two hours 15 minutes. During the winter of 2014 she underwent a €13 million conversion and lengthening to operate on LNG in Bremerhaven. She had a new 15m stern section added, increasing her length from 79m to 93m and car capacity to 75 cars, with lifts installed linking her four decks.

Nordlicht operates AG EMS fast passenger sailings between Emden and Borkum', making four crossings a day, with an hour's crossing time. At weekends during the summer she undertakes occasional sailings from Eemshaven in 25 minutes as well. The 1989-built craft can carry 272 passengers.

Rederij Wadden

Rederij Wadden Transport's solitary vessel, *Terschelling Bank*, was built in 1954 in Bremerhaven for operation from the port to Nordenham. She was acquired in 2001 and entered service a year later, replacing a coaster on freight sailings from Harlingen to Vlieland and Terschelling. She carries freight, heavy loads and construction materials and sails weekly on a Friday, undertaking additional sailings as and when required. In 2011 she was to be refurbished to offer passenger sailings with a capacity of 300, and in 2012 a merger with EVT was proposed, but both proposals came to nothing. SM

The catamaran Nordlicht crossing between Emden and Borkum. MATT DAVIES

A chance encounter at Birkenhead in 1961 encouraged Roy Fenton to unearth the story of

The Liberty Colliers

In the quarter century after World War II, the Liberty ship became very familiar, increasingly under the Greek, Panama or Liberian flags. But in April 1961 this ship enthusiast, then just a teenager, encountered a ship which clearly had the hull of a Liberty, but was otherwise very different. In particular, its engines were placed aft and it had a unique set of cargo gear.

One of my favourite books, Laurence Dunn's 'Ship Recognition', gave a clue to the identity of the Yugoslav *Uskok*: she was one of the two dozen 'Liberty colliers'. Years later, I found the full story of these ships in Mitchell and Sawyer's 'The Liberty Ship', the book which gave the first definitive account of the type and which has never been bettered.

ABOVE The Liberty colliers did not retain their original names long, as they were quickly bought by coal and gas companies. Imboden Seam was purchased by the Eastern Gas and Fuel Associates as early as August 1946, but was not renamed Reading until the following year. WSS LTD

Commercial crisis

The design of the basic Liberty ship was a response to the need for cargo ships to be built quickly to serve the Allies in wartime. In contrast, the Liberty colliers were constructed for purely commercial reasons. There was concern in US shipping circles that the collier fleet which moved coal from Hampton Roads to the ports of New England had been hard hit by war losses, and was also seriously ageing.

To avoid a potential crisis in coal shipments, the survivors of the 40 ships in the trade on the outbreak of war needed to be replaced urgently and supplemented. Thus, early in 1944, consideration was given to adapting the well-tried Liberty design as a coal carrier.

There were undoubted advantages in using such a standardised design, with engines, boilers and hull components being built on a production-line basis. But there were also serious challenges for the naval architects. The biggest of these was to adapt the 'tween deck design of the basic Liberty to give the full depth holds, without an intermediate deck, needed in the coal trade. Extra strengthening was needed, especially of bulkheads. As the colliers would spend half their time at sea in ballast, wing tanks were fitted to enhance ballasting arrangements. To expedite loading, the water ballast had to be discharged quickly once the colliers were close to the coal port, so extra-powerful ballast pumps were needed.

Another priority was the

ABOVE Seen in the Cape Cod Canal, Winding Gulf was an example of the ageing Eastern Seaboard collier. The 1918-built steamer survived World War II but, replaced by a Liberty collier, she was broken up at Philadelphia in 1948. ERIC JOHNSON

ABOVE A view from a Cape Cod Canal bridge of Thomas Tracy, built as Herrin Seam, shows the steel hatch covers, two to each hold, and the kingposts which helped raise them.

ABOVE Berwindvale showing how the steel hatch covers were raised against the steel kingposts when loading or discharging.

ABOVE Five colliers were converted to barges, including Arlington, which had her engines removed in 1962. IAIN G. LOVIE

need to move the engines aft. Although many of the pre-war colliers had their machinery amidships, this was not ideal. The long shaft tunnel reduced the capacity of the aftermost holds, and was itself vulnerable to grab damage during unloading. But moving the engines aft in a Liberty hull was not that simple.

Rather than the rectangular box amidships, the space available aft was more triangular in shape. The engine could be placed here, but the boilers and auxiliaries had to be on a higher deck; hence one of the design changes to the hull was the long poop deck aft. Accommodation for the navigating officers remained in the bridge house amidships, with engineers and other crew above the poop. Accommodation was carefully sealed to help keep out coal dust during loading and discharging.

The standard Liberty's cargo gear was not needed in the Eastern Seaboard coal trade, where loading and discharge was by shoreside equipment. The masts were therefore eliminated, but pairs of steel kingposts were fitted to operate the steel hatch covers. Pole masts were provided to carry navigation lights and radio aerials.

Constructing colliers

The Delta Shipbuilding Company of New Orleans was given the job of designing and building the colliers. Although building of the company's shipyard was authorised only in 1941, it still managed an impressive output of ships. These comprised 132 of the standard Liberties, 32 of the type modified as tankers (for which the yard also undertook design work), and the 24 Liberty colliers.

Delivery of the colliers began with *Jagger Seam*, completed in March 1945, with all 24 delivered by the end of October 1945, whereupon the yard closed down. Machinery for all the Liberties was standardised, and Delta took engines for the colliers from Joshua Hendy Ironworks in California, from Filer and Stowell in Milwaukee, and from the General Machinery Company in Ohio. Thus, engines were shipped to New Orleans from long distances, an interesting logistical exercise.

The basic Liberties were mainly named after dead citizens, who were undoubtedly worthy but together made for a rather dull set of names. The colliers were treated differently, being named after coal seams in the USA.

Carrying the coal

For many years after the war, the Liberty colliers did largely as they were intended to go. Coal mined in West Virginia was railed to tidewater at Hampton Roads, and shipped north by the colliers to ports such as Boston for domestic use, and for generating electricity and gas. In this trade they were particularly successful. They were quicker to load and discharge than the previous generation of colliers, and, being capable of 12 knots, were also significantly faster. Being oil-

ABOVE A fine view of Malden in ballast condition. The letter M on her funnel stood for Mystic Steam Ship Company, one of the shipowning subsidiaries of Eastern Gas and Fuel.

ABOVE Photographic evidence that the colliers did come to Europe: Reading on the New Waterway in July 1970, having recently discharged a cargo of sulphur, which still stains her side. GEORGE GARWOOD/WORLD SHIP SOCIETY LTD

fired, they needed smaller crews than the older coal burners.

Initially owned by the United States War Shipping Administration, the colliers were sold during the 1940s to major collier operators. The biggest fleet belonged to Eastern Gas and Fuel Associates, who operated them under their subsidiary Mystic Steam Ship Co Inc. Marine Navigation Co Inc, A. H. Bull and Co, M. and J. Tracy Inc of New York, plus the Sprague Steamship Company and Staples Coal Company, both of Boston, also had fleets.

Many remained under the United States flag for their entire lives, although the first departures came in 1954. That year Eastern Gas and Fuel Associates moved four of its fleet to an associate, Atlantic Bulk Trading Corporation of Monrovia, and renamed them *Brant*, *Gull*, *Osprey* and *Tern*, all flagged out to Liberia.

Collier casualties

Casualties among the colliers were remarkably few, at

ABOVE Gull was one of the first of the colliers to forsake the US flag, being registered in Liberia under the ownership of Atlantic Bulk Trading Corporation, another subsidiary of Eastern Gas and Fuel Associates.

BELOW The Yugoslavian Uskok, the ship which sparked the author's interest in the Liberty colliers when she visited Birkenhead Docks in April 1961. MICHAEL D. J. LENNON

LIBERTY COLLIERS

ORIGINAL NAME	LATER NAMES	FATE
Jagger Seam	1947: Boston	B/u Taiwan 1968
Sewanee Seam	1947: Newton	Conv to barge 1963
Herrin Seam	1946: Thomas Tracy, 1960: Marine Leader; 1962: Canterbury Leader	B/u Taiwan 1967
La Salle Seam	1947: Marine Trader	B/u Spain 1968
Streator Seam	1947: Lexington	Conv to barge 1963
Linton Seam	1948: Seaconnet; 1963: Seacomet (Liberia).	B/u Spain 1964
Redstone Seam	1946: Berwindvale; 1963: Point Vincente	B/u Spain 1965
Jewell Seam	1948: Winchester	B/u Japan 1967
Merrimac Seam	1949: Marine Shipper	B/u New Orleans 1970
Jellicoe Seam	1948: Charlestown (Liberia); 1954: Brant (Liberia); 1961: Hajduk (Yugoslav)	B/u Germany 1967
Bon Air Seam	1948: Penobscot; 1962: Marine Coaster	B/u Japan 1965
Glamorgan Seam	1948: Plymouth; 1963: Marine Merchant	B/u Taiwan 1968
Sewell Seam	1947: Concord	Conv to barge 1964
Beckley Seam	1947: Malden	Conv to barge 1963
Pocahontas Seam	1948: Medford; 1954: Osprey; 1964: Andromeda (Bulgaria); 1970: Slavianka (Bulgaria)	B/u Yugoslavia 1972
Eagle Seam	1947: Marine Transport	B/u Taiwan 1971
Powellton Seam	1946: Evelyn	B/u Japan 1963
Chilton Seam	1963: Mae	B/u Japan 1963
Banner Seam	1946: Michael Tracy	B/u New Jersey 1962
Roda Seam	1947: Mount Tamalpais; 1947: Everett; 1954: Gull (Liberia); 1964: Algol (Bulgaria); 1970: Sakar (Bulgaria)	B/u Yugoslavia 1972
Imboden Seam	1947: Reading	B/u Spain 1972
Freeport Seam	1946: Edith	B/u Japan 1963
Mingo Seam	1946: Mount Sunapee; 1947: Melrose; 1954: Tern (Liberia); 1961: Uskok (Yugoslavia)	B/u Yugoslavia 1967
Pittsburg Seam	1947: Arlington	Conv to barge 1962

NAMES AND FATES • The names are those carried under the US flag unless noted otherwise. All were completed during 1945 by the Delta Shipbuilding Company of New Orleans, and are arranged here in yard number sequence, which was not always the order in which they were completed.

ABOVE The Bulgarian Andromeda looking in smart condition. MICHAEL D. J. LENNON

least while they still had their machinery. The only significant one involved *Reading* (formerly *Imboden Seam*), which went ashore in Buzzards Bay, Massachusetts in February 1957. Refloated but with her back almost broken, she was dry-docked in New York and, after very extensive repairs, returned to service: an indication of how much her owners valued her.

However, two of the hulls became casualties after they were converted to barges. *Eastern 1*, the former *Streator Seam*, broke away from her tug in January 1969 and was stranded on the coast of North Carolina. This sealed her fate, and after refloating she was scrapped in Spain. The only hull of the 24 built which escaped the breakers was that of another barge conversion, *Eastern 2* (ex-*Sewanee Seam*), which also broke away from her tug in 1969, grounded near Sandy Hook and broke up.

Collier diaspora

The author's surprise at seeing *Uskok* discharging grain to a warehouse in Birkenhead was because these colliers had been largely unknown in European waters. But as they aged, and the US domestic coal trade declined, they began to trade more widely. Yugoslavia's state shipping enterprises had a particular appetite for them and, as well as *Uskok*, had *Hajduk*. Bulgaria's state shipping company had *Andromeda* and *Algol*.

In addition to the two Yugoslavian ships which visited the Mersey, several US-owned examples are known to have come to Europe: *Gull* was seen in Birkenhead during the early 1960s, and *Reading* was photographed on the New Waterway in 1970. There is also photographic evidence that *Lexington* visited the Thames in June 1950.

Conclusion

The Liberty design, which was in many respects British, proved very adaptable. Variants were constructed for specialised military uses, and it also proved possible to fit them out as tankers. But the Liberty collier was the most significant variant, involving a complete rethink of the hull arrangement, machinery spaces and cargo gear, as well as a myriad of minor changes to suit its intended trade. The type was also unique in the overall Liberty programme in that it had a purely commercial role, and was not intended to help the Allies' war effort.

In several respects, the colliers were actually superior to the basic design, for instance in their greater capacity for water ballast. This made them more seaworthy, and prompts the thought that maybe the basic design had too little ballast capacity for safety. There were various cases, both during the war and afterwards, of Liberties becoming casualties through ballasting problems.

A celebrated example was that of Federal's *Leicester*, which needed to carry additional, solid ballast for a voyage from Tilbury to New York in September 1948. When she encountered a hurricane in the Atlantic, her solid ballast shifted, and she took a 70 degree list. Although, at just 24 ships, the sample is small, the Liberty colliers sustained no such casualties during their days steaming the Eastern seaboard or the North Atlantic.

Despite their rarity in European waters – which gave some excitement to one teenage enthusiast during their occasional appearances – the Liberty colliers were an interesting class of vessel which deserve to be remembered. SM

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Norwegian Escape under construction at Meyer Werft. COMPANY PHOTO

Ships MONTHLY SHIP OF THE MONTH

Norwegian Escape

NCL's new ship is the company's largest

Nicholas Leach goes on board NCL's latest cruise ship to see what she has to offer.

ABOVE Norwegian Escape emerges from Meyer Werft GMBH shipyard in Germany with her distinctive hull design by marine wildlife artist Guy Harvey. COMPANY PHOTO

The latest mega cruise ship to enter service is Norwegian Cruise Line's *Norwegian Escape*, the first of the new Breakaway-Plus class, which entered service on 22 October 2015 after being formally handed over by Meyer Werft at Papenburg, after a building period of only 17 months, and headed to Hamburg and then on to Southampton. She undertook a couple of short inaugural cruises before a ten-day positioning voyage across the Atlantic to Miami, from where she will operate seven-night Eastern Caribbean cruise destinations, including St Thomas, US Virgin Islands; Tortola, British Virgin Islands; and Nassau. She was named in Miami by Armando Christian Perez, an American rapper, on 9 November 2015.

Norwegian Escape has the distinction of being the largest ship in the NCL fleet of 14 ships, with capacity for 4,200 passengers and 1,742 crew members, making her slightly larger than *Norwegian Epic*, which is in turn just bigger than *Norwegian Breakaway* and *Getaway*, the ships upon which she is based. *Escape* is the first ship in what is termed the company's new Breakaway-Plus class and represents, according to NCL, 'an evolution of the line's history of providing guests with the freedom

Norwegian Escape

A standard balcony cabin.

NCL logo mounted on Escape's funnel.

Part of the ropes course at the stern.

Ships
MONTHLY

The Aqua Park is the largest such amenity at sea.

The Kids' Aqua Park features an enclosed slide.

The Skyline Bar is one of many such venues on board.

and flexibility to enjoy their ideal cruise holiday'. She is 164,600gt, measures 1,069ft by 136ft and has 19 decks, with 78 per cent of the cabins facing outside. She is slightly wider than the Breakaway ships, with an additional passenger deck to boost capacity to 4,248.

As with the other ships in NCL's fleet, she has some impressive artwork on her hull, designed by marine wildlife artist Guy Harvey. Spanning more than 1,000ft in length from bow to stern, the artwork features marine wildlife and is intended to 'blend two underwater seas together'. The design also features Caribbean sealife, including sting rays, sea turtles, whale sharks and a variety of tropical fish. Power comes from five MAN V48/60CR-type engines, giving a total of 76,800kW driving Azipods.

The accommodation is fairly standard to the cruise industry, with a mixture of staterooms and more upmarket offerings, as well as a range of different options. These include 1,168 balcony staterooms, 407 inside staterooms, 48 Family Oceanview staterooms that accommodate up to five guests, 82 Studios designed and priced for solo travellers, and rooms for multi-generational groups, spa enthusiasts and others. There are 47 wheelchair accessible staterooms in various categories.

The most luxurious accommodation on *Norwegian Escape* is The Haven by Norwegian, which consists of 25 two-bedroom family 'Villas', each with its own three-story covered courtyard and an expanded forward sundeck with a cantilevered whirlpool. This area is described as being a 'ship-within-a-ship suite' and has a price to match its exclusivity. It includes an outdoor dining space in the Haven's private restaurant.

Dining options include Le Bistro, Cagney's, La Cucina, Bayamo, Pincho Tapas Bar and a new food hall called Food Republic, developed by Miami-based The Pubbelly Restaurant Group. A number of the restaurants serve food that is included in the normal cruise fare, but plenty of the speciality restaurants attract extra charges, as well as a service charge in the region of 18 per cent, which seems rather high to UK cruisers. NCL claim to be offering the best food at sea, and the large range of dining options backs this up, although perhaps more of the restaurants could be included in the standard cruise price.

Among the entertainment on offer are two Broadway musicals that headline the 900-seat Escape Theater. Nightlife onboard includes Tobacco Road, Jimmy Buffett's Margaritaville restaurant and 5 O'Clock Somewhere Bar. The District Brew House serves more than 24 draught beers, while The Cellars offers 'an array of wine experiences'. No drinks are included in the cruise fare, and with service charges and tax they can be very expensive extras.

The ship seems to have been designed to attract as wide a

Norwegian Escape being towed down the river Ems.

Norwegain Escape at Southampton's Ocean Terminal on 28 October.

NORWEGIAN ESCAPE	
SHIPYARD	Meyer Werft HMbH, Germany
BUILDING	Steel cutting 20.3.2014, keel laying 19.9.2014, entered service 23.10.2015
DIMENSIONS	1,069ft x 136ft x 27ft
TONNAGE	164,600gt
PASSENGERS	4,248, 19 decks
CREW	1,742
POWER	2 x MAN 14V48/60CR (2 x 16,800kW) 3 x MAN 12V48/60CR (3 x 14,400kW)
PROPULSION	Diesel-electric; two ABB Azipod XO units (2 × 20 MW)
HOME PORT	Miami
CRUISES	Seven-day Eastern Caribbean from Miami; ports include St Thomas, US Virgin Islands; Tortola, British Virgin Islands; and Nassau, Bahamas

A rendering of Norwegain Escape, Norwegian Breakaway and Norwegian Getaway, NCL's three newest ship.

NCL fleet upgraded and expanded

The introduction of Norwegian Escape brings the NCL fleet up to 14 ships, with the company saying it offers unparalleled entertainment and dining. Indeed, there are 28 dining options on Norwegian Escape.

NCL is financially strong at the moment, and is growing its fleet, with three more ships to be built. Its other brands, Regent Seven Seas Cruises and Oceania Cruises, are also expanding their luxury fleets. Seven Sea Explorer, the most luxurious ship ever built, will appear in July 2016.

NCL currently has 29 embarkation ports and 63 ports of call, and is having the first ship, a sister to Escape, purpose built for the Chinese market coming on stream in 2017. The company's current fleet are also being upgraded and refurbished, as evidenced by the expensive recent refit of Norwegian Epic, which went to Damen Shiprepair Brest for a scheduled refit and maintenance programme in September. The vessel remained in Brest's largest dry dock until 18 October.

range of people as possible. Not only are there cabins for solo travellers, but there is a Splash Academy, where parents can leave children during the day. Outside is the Aqua Park, Kids' Aqua Park with an enclosed slide, spray cannons and an elevated ropes course at the stern. SM

Norwegian Escape returning to Southampton from one of her inaugural cruises. MARITIME PHOTOGRAPHIC

What's on board Norwegian Escape

678 OCEAN PLACE • The three-deck-high Ocean Place is the centre of the ship, and has a huge chandelier hanging in the middle. Many of the ship's bars and restaurants lead off this area.

AQUA PARK • NCL have added more water features on Norwegian Escape, with two water slides on the upper decks, as well as various family features, including the Kids Aqua Park. It is said to be the largest water park at sea.

GARDEN CAFE • This is the main complimentary indoor restaurant, which serves breakfast, lunch and dinner.

MANDARA SPA • Norwegian Escape has the largest spa of any in the NCL fleet. It includes the largest Thermal Suite at sea, as well as the first Snow Room, in which powdery snow is created.

THE SUPPER CLUB • One of the many entertainment venues offering an 'unforgettable dinner and show'.

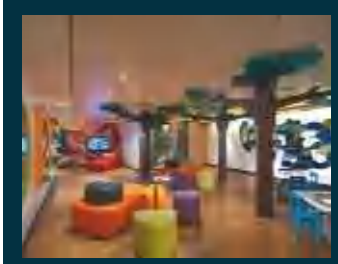
O'SHEEHAN'S • Another complimentary food outlet, offering American food in a 'relaxed pub atmosphere'.

TASTE AND SAVOR RESTAURANTS • The included main dining room options are divided into three venues: Taste, Savor and The Manhattan Room. The first two are located on deck 6.

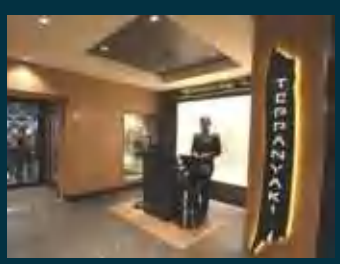
SPLASH ACADEMY • A youth centre that includes dedicated play spaces for specific age groups, as well as a nursery for cruisers two years and under.

FITNESS CENTRE • The state-of-the-art fitness centre furnished with the latest weight training and cardio equipment.

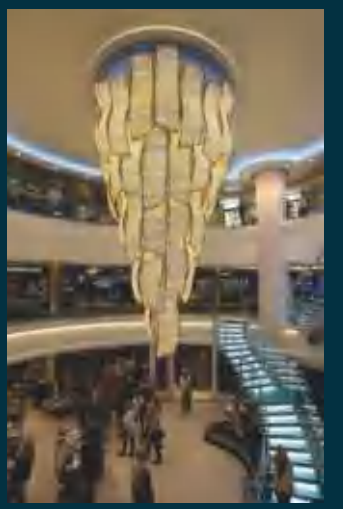
FOOD REPUBLIC • A restaurant from The Pubbelly Restaurant Group featuring global cuisine for sampling and sharing.



SPLASH ACADEMY • The ship's complimentary kids' facilities.



TEPPANYAKI • A speciality restaurant offering Japanese cuisine.



OCEAN PLACE * The centre of the ship, spanning decks 6, 7 and 8.

German fast attack craft

Patrick Boniface profiles the German Navy's Type 143A fast attack craft, and looks at their origins and development.

In December 1982 the then Federal German Navy was eagerly anticipating the delivery from the shipbuilders Lürssen Werft the first of ten new Type 143A fast attack craft. The craft, named *Gepard*, was seen as something of a change in direction for the German Bundesmarine. The coastal geography of West Germany meant coastal (now known as littoral) warfare was a constant consideration, and the craft was developed and built with the unique demands of the area in mind.

During both World Wars the German Navy developed a vast array of torpedo and gunboat designs that ultimately led to the development of the dreaded and lethal E boats of World War II. These craft were all designed to take into account the relatively shallow waters of the North and Baltic Seas and pack a punch way beyond their modest size. Post-war Germany continued developing fast attack craft, often selling designs to foreign powers who wished to operate a fleet of affordable naval vessels to deny access of sea routes and so called choke points, where fast attack craft and mines (or a combination of both) could be used to great effect.

That the Germans even built the ten members of the class is only because of the failure of the USA, Italy and Germany to jointly develop the NATO PHM (Hydrofoil) programme. In the early 1970s naval hydrofoils armed with missiles and guns were seen as an answer to coastal patrol work in relatively shallow waters such as the North Sea and Baltic.

While Italy and the United States ultimately built their own unique programmes, the

ABOVE In early 2015 six of the Gepard class visited London's Docklands; Frettchen is inboard, together with an unidentified sister outboard.

The last of the Gepards to enter service was Hyane, which was commissioned on 13 November 1984. She is seen entering Portsmouth Dockyard.

Geier in the river Tamar, with her array of weaponry, impressive on a vessel with a displacement of only 398 long tons, clearly visible.

TYPE 143A	
DISPLACEMENT	398 long tons
DIMENSIONS	57.8m x 7.8m x 2.6m
PROPULSION	4 shafts, with 4 diesel engines
SPEED	40 knots
COMPLEMENT	5 officers, 31 enlisted
WEAPONS	Various, but includes: 1 Otobreda 76mm rapid firing gun, 4x MM38 Exocet anti ship missiles, 1 x GDC 21 cell Rolling Air Frame Missile (RAM) anti aircraft missile system, 2 x MG50-1 machine guns and a mine laying capability

NATO project never got off the ground and German interest in hydrofoils thus evaporated; instead the Bundesmarine went back to tried and tested technologies and designs: the well used and proven type 143 fast attack craft.

The first of the Zobel class was ordered from shipbuilders Lurssen on 12 December 1961 and was followed by a further nine ships: *Wiesel*, *Dachs*, *Nerz*, *Gepard*, *Frettchen*, *Ozelot*, *Hermelin*, *Puma* and *Hyane*. Each vessel as delivered was armed with two 40mm Bofors guns, four 533mm torpedoes and four depth charges, along with a mine-laying capability.

All in all they had impressive armament for vessels with a full load displacement of just 390.6 tonnes and a complement of only 32 officers and men. Each of the Zobels was powered by four Mercedes Benz MB518B diesel engines driving four shafts. This arrangement gave a top speed of 42 knots and an unrefuelled range of 700 nautical miles at 35 knots.

After over two decades of service, the Zobels were gradually removed from service

ABOVE Gepard, lead ship of the second batch of Type 143A fast attack craft and seen here at Plymouth, was decommissioned from service on 12 December 2014.

ABOVE The distinctive dark grey paintwork of these German fast attack craft is shown here to good effect, with Hermelin outboard of one of her sisterships.

Each of the Gepard class vessels is home to a complement of 5 officers and 31 enlisted men. Wiesel is seen here approaching Devonport Dockyard.

ABOVE Nerz entered service with the German Navy on 5 July 1983 and continued in service until 31 March 2012.

ABOVE Frettchen entering Portsmouth Harbour; clearly visible in this photograph are the four MM38 Exocet anti-ship missiles, and the 21-cell GDC Ram anti-aircraft missile system towards the stern and the Otobreda 76mm gun forward.

as the later Gepards began to enter service. *Wiesel*, *Dachs*, *Gepard*, *Frettchen*, *Ozelot* and *Hyane* were transferred to Turkey between 1982 and 1984.

Following the collapse of the NATO PHM programme, due to immature technologies and an alarming high unit cost of around DM1.4 billion (1978 prices), the decision was taken to order an improved version of the basic S143 design, known as the S143A. In the years since the delivery of Zobel and her sisters, technology and the attendant threats had moved on considerably, and the new S143A design tried to address as many of these as possible.

The strike capability of the Zobels was retained, with four MM38 Exocet anti-ship missiles and a single 76mm Oto Melera gun positioned forward of the bridge and a single 24-cell launcher for the RAM (Rolling Airframe Missile) replacing the second 76mm gun in the Zobels. The Gepard class also lost the torpedo tubes of the earlier design, but was provided with rails for launching mines. This latter addition was to add flexibility to the class in order to deny adversaries access to places such as the Baltic Sea, where cheap and numerous sea mines could easily bottle up whole fleets of warships.

Like the Zobels, the Gepards' hulls were of wooden construction. The building method consisted of four layers of resistant woods on a steel frame, together with a superstructure made of composite materials and aluminium to reduce the magnetic signature when working in minefields.

For propulsion, four MTU MA16V 956TB91 diesels provided a maximum speed of 40 knots through two shafts, driving fixed-pitch five-bladed propellers. Accommodation for the crew of 34 was air-conditioned, with each cabin housing three to seven men. The S143A also introduced, for the first time on fast attack craft in the Bundesmarine, hot and cold water and showers for crew.

Orders for ten

The Bundesmarine ordered ten craft, with the first, third, fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh Gepards (*Puma*, *Nerz*, *Zobel*, *Frettchen*, *Dachs* and *Ozelot*) being built by Lürssen at its Vegesack facility. The second, ninth and tenth vessels (*Hermelin*, *Wisel* and *Hyane)* were constructed by Kroger and Rendsburg. Each boat took between three and three and a half years to complete.

On 25 September 1981 *Gepard* was launched by Ursula Bethge, wife of Vice-Admiral Ansgar Bethge, the Inspector of the Navy. On acceptance, she and her sisters formed the 7th FPB Flotilla at Kiel in autumn 1984. The vessels have been altered and modernised periodically, but remain essentially much as they did when first commissioned.

The surviving members of the class serve with the 7.Schnellbootgeschwader (7th Fast Patrol Boat Squadron) and are based at Warnemünde. Of the original class, four vessels have been discarded. FGS *Nerz* and FGS *Dachs* were decommissioned on 31 March 2012, FGS *Gepard* followed on12 December 2014 and six days later sistership FGS *Ozelot* was the last of the class to be taken out of service with the German Navy. In the 2020s a new class of corvette is being planned to take the place of these small, fast and versatile patrol craft. SM

Ships Pictorial

Have you an outstanding photo that would grace our gallery? Send your image to Ships Monthly for inclusion in these pages, which showcase the best in ship photography around the world.

▲ Two former English Channel ferry favourites together at Piraeus on 19 October 2015. On the left is the 1972-built Panagia Tinou (5,122gt), the former Hengist and later Romilda, berthed next to Vitsentzos Kornaros (6,387gt), built in 1976 as Pride of Winchester. DARREN HOLDAWAY

▲ The Netherlands-flagged general cargo ship Sampogracht (23,688dwt) arriving at Southampton, and heading for the Western Docks, from Newport, RI carrying a cargo of yachts. She is operated by the Dutch company Spliethoff and was built by Stocznia Szczecinska Nowa, Szczecin, Poland. KEN SHORT

▲ The frigate Winnipeg passing Greenhithe, heading down the river Thames after leaving the Royal Docks on the evening of 19 September. The Halifax class guided-missile frigate has served in the Royal Canadian Navy since 1996. Laid down on 20 March 1993 at Saint John Shipbuilding Co, New Brunswick, she was launched on 25 June 1994. KRISPEN ATKINSON

▼ The preserved steamship Shieldhall draws a crowd at Poole Quay on 21 August 2015. She is well known around south coast ports, operating out of Southampton, and is the largest working steamship in Britain. The 1,972gt 82m vessel was launched in July 1955 and spent her working life as a 'sludge boat' on the Clyde, working out of Glasgow. ANDREW COOKE

▶ The vehicle carrier Höegh Transporter (57,757gt) departing Auckland, New Zealand. The 1999-built vessel measures 200m by 32m, has a capacity of 6,500CEU and a speed of 18 knots, and is one of Höegh Autoliners' fleet of Pure Car and Truck Carrier (PCTC) vessels operating deepsea and shortsea routes. TREVOR COPPOCK/SEAPIXONLINE

Holland America Lines' cruise ship Rotterdam passing the Hook of Holland as she departs Rotterdam cruise terminal for Eidfjord on the evening of 1 August 2015. Built in 1997, she carries 1,668 passengers and is the sixth Holland America vessel to bear the name. DAVID WALKER

Developments along the northern coast of Russia are continuing to generate demand for ice-capable vessels, as Jim Shaw explains.

ICE SHIPS

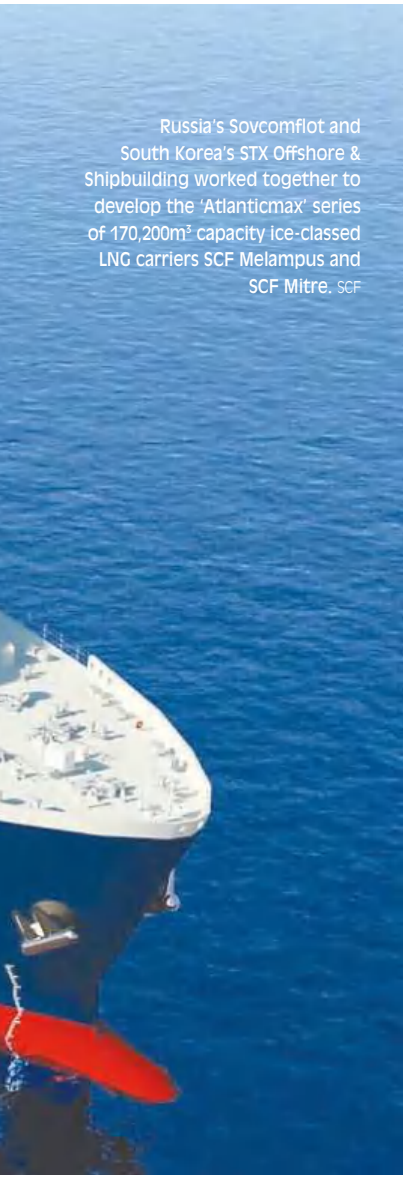
RIGHT South Korea's Daewoo Shipbuilding and Marine Engineering (DSME) is building a large series of Arc 7 ice-class LNG carriers for Russia's Yamal LNG project that will be capable of operating in ambient temperatures as low as minus 52 degrees Celsius while breaking ice up to two metres thick in both forward and reverse directions using Wärtsilä propulsion systems. WÄRTSILÄ

BELOW Two icebreakers to be built by Russia's Vyborg Shipyard to a design based on Aker Aker's ARC 130A will be employed to escort and assist tankers in Russia's Gulf of Ob by 2018. Aker Artic

Developments along the northern coast of Russia are continuing to generate demand for ice-capable vessels, with a series of new icebreaking tugs, gas transporting tankers and heavylift module carriers being built for regional projects.

For work in the Gulf of Ob, located south of the Kara Sea, Finland's Aker Arctic and Russia's Vyborg Shipyard have been jointly working on the design of two new icebreakers, both for employment within Gazprom Neft's Novy Port project. The twin vessels will be based on Aker's ARC 130A design, originally developed for the Finnish Transport Agency, and will utilise a similar propulsion system, consisting of three azimuth thrusters, two in the stern and one in the bow, but of stronger output to allow the ships to break ice 2m thick both ahead and astern.

Unlike the Finnish vessel, which will be the world's first



Russia's Sovcomflot and South Korea's STX Offshore & Shipbuilding worked together to develop the 'Atlanticmax' series of 170,200m³ capacity ice-classed LNG carriers SCF Melampus and SCF Mitre. SCF

two ships of the series, *Velikiy Novgorod* and *Pskov*, are already working on long-term contracts with Gazprom.

All the Atlanticmax LNG carriers have a cargo capacity of 170,200m³ and are equipped with triple-fuel diesel electric power generation systems. They have been built to ice class 'Ice2' standards and have been designed to operate at very low temperatures and in harsh climatic conditions.

In the Sovcomflot fleet they follow the South Korean-built tanker *SCF Baltica*, which was the first heavy-tonnage vessel to carry cargo on the Northern Sea Route from the Atlantic to the Pacific in 2010, and the Suezmax tanker *Vladimir Tikhonov*, also South Korean-built, which opened up a new route across the Arctic for heavy-tonnage vessels passing north of the Novosibirsk Islands and now known as 'The Tikhonov Route'.

'Oblique' icebreaker

Recently completing Arctic ice trials in the Kara Sea has been Russia's *Baltika*, the world's first 'oblique' icebreaker. As the first ship to be built with an asymmetric hull form, LNG-fueled icebreaker (see SM, Sept 2014), the Russian ships will use conventional fuel to achieve a combined 21.5MW output at the thrusters. They will be classed by the Russian Maritime Register of Shipping and will measure 122m by 25m with a design draught of 8m.

Aker Arctic has also entered into a cooperation agreement with South Korea's Samsung Heavy Industries covering the design of six ice class tankers, for the Novy Port project, which will be used to transport oil from the Gulf of Ob to Murmansk.

LNG carriers

Another South Korean builder, STX Shipbuilding, has recently completed the 94,700dwt LNG tanker *SCF Mitre* for Russia's Sovcomflot for operation under long-term charter to Royal Dutch Shell. A sistership, *SCF Melampus*, was delivered earlier this year, with both vessels being part of a series of advanced design 'Atlanticmax' type LNG carriers developed for Arctic deployment. The first

Ice class pipe layer

The development of undersea petroleum fields in the Arctic has generated demand for ice capable pipelay vessels and such is the wide beam 178.27m by 46.0m Lewek Constellation, which recently established an industry record for pipelay operations in the Gulf of Mexico by deploying 3.2km of 16-inch diameter pipe in 7,368ft (2,246m) of water at a tension of 632 metric tons, the highest tension yet experienced in the history of rigid reeled-lay operations.

Built in Vietnam by a subsidiary of owner EMAS AMC, which took over Aker Marine Contractors (AMC) several years ago, the 48,786gt vessel has an ice-classed hull capable of transiting through ice 0.8m thick. Pipe laying is accomplished with an 800-metric-ton Huisman multi-lay system that is able to support both rigid and non-rigid pipelines, and a 3,000-metric-ton capacity Huisman offshore heavy lift crane.

In addition, two Schilling work class remotely operated vehicles and a portable reel system are carried to reduce mobilisation time. Currently, the DP3-rated Lewek Constellation is one of only two vessels in the world in its class that has achieved the highest environmental and comfort notations, with all accommodation in single berth cabins.

ABOVE Specifically designed for rigid reeled-lay operations, the pipe lay vessel Lewek Constellation has been completed to ice class standards for possible Arctic deployment. AMAS GROUP

ABOVE Built with an asymmetric hull form, the new Russian icebreaker Baltika can open up a channel for vessels that are wider then her own beam of 20.5m by moving sideways through the ice. AKER ARCTIC

The first two ice-classed LNG carriers of the 'Atlanticmax' type, Velikiy Novgorod and Pskov, are already working long-term contracts in the Arctic with Russia's Gazprom. SCF

A side view of the recently delivered Russian icebreaker Baltika discloses little of her unique asymmetric hull form, which allows her to break ice while moving sideways. ARCTECH HELSINKI SHIPYARD

ABOVE Twin ice class heavylift carriers being built by China's Guangzhou Shipyard for Red Box Energy Services will be used to transport LNG plant modules from Europe to Russia's Yamal Peninsula. RED BOX

Baltika demonstrated that she could break ice while operating ahead, astern or sideways, with the latter operation used to open up a channel for vessels that are wider then her own beam of 20.5m.

On trials, it was found that the 3,800gt vessel could successfully break ice 1.2m thick moving bow first, and could make a 50m-wide channel in ice 80cm thick when working obliquely. *Baltika's* propulsion system is made up of three Wärtsilä 9L26 engine/gensets providing power to three Steerprop azimuthing thrusters to give a speed of 14 knots in open water and three knots while breaking ice 1m thick.

The new vessel was laid down by Russia's Yanmar yard at Kaliningrad in 2012 and completed by Finland's Arctech Helsinki Shiyard late last year. Russia's Federal Marine and River Transport Agency (Rosmorrechflot) has been conducting the vessel's ice trials and its FBI Sea Rescue Service will operate the €76 million icebreaker out of St Petersburg.

'Red Box' transporters

Construction of a large LNG production plant on Russia's Yamal peninsula in the Arctic has generated the need for two 28,500dwt Polar Class 3 heavy module carrying vessels that will be used to transport 264 modules with a total weight of over 400,000 tons to the site. To measure 206.6m by 43m, the twin ships are being built by China's Guangzhou Shipyard International to a design furnished by Finland's Deltamarin Ltd and Aker Arctic Technology Inc.

When delivered early next year, the ice-strengthened vessels will be operated by Hong Kong-based ZPCM-Red Box Energy Services, a partnership formed between Shanghai Zhenhua Heavy Industry Co Ltd (ZPMC) and Zhenhua Logistics Group (ZHLG) of China, and Red Box Founders HK Limited (RBF HK Ltd) of Hong Kong. Both vessels will be capable of breaking level ice up to 1.5m thick at three knots and each will have sterns that will be completely flush and open to allow the loading and discharge of heavy modules. SM

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Belgium's premier port

Krispen Atkinson describes the port of Antwerp, one of the busiest and biggest in Europe, which handles everything from chemical tankers to containers ships, and cruise ships to coasters.

Lying on the river Scheldt, and just a stone's throw from the border with the Netherlands, is Belgium's premier port, Antwerp. In 2014 the port ranked 11th in the world for volume of freight handled, and was in the top five of Europe's busiest ports, handling a wide range of commodities, making for an interesting mixture of visiting ships in its environs.

The port's origins can be traced back to the 1200s as a transit point for passengers travelling from England and parts of southern Holland, with the port being a centre for trade in wool, cloth and wine in later years. In modern times it was Napoleon who saw the potential of the port, commissioning the building of the Bonaparte and Willem Docks. These docks still exist today, but are used for museum and recreational purposes.

After Belgium gained independence from the Netherlands in 1863, the port began to be developed, and started taking on its modern form. With the riverside berths rebuilt and straightened, the Van Cauwelaert lock was completed in 1928. This lock is still in use today, mainly for barge traffic.

The port's largest expansion came after World War II, with the 'Grote Doorsteek'. This saw the development of the Kanaal Docks, which took the port north towards the Dutch border. This developed in 1967 with the opening of the Zandvliet lock, which was the largest lock in the world, measuring 500m (1,600ft) long by 57m (187ft) wide.

Berendrecht Lock was commissioned in 1989, when, built next to Zandvliet lock, it became the world's largest lock. It was the same length as the Zandvliet lock, but wider, with a breadth of 68m (223ft), enabling wider ships to gain access to Antwerp. It is not unusual to see three or four ships locking through together into the enclosed port.

Today, the port handles a wide range of commodities, although petrochemicals are the main focus, as Antwerp is the largest petrochemical cluster in Europe. Within the complex are four refineries, operated by Total, ExxonMobil, Independent Belgium Refinery (IBR) and ATPC. Also operating chemical terminals within the port are BASF, Bayer and Air Liquide, handling a wide range of products. Ineos Oxide recently commissioned the largest ethylene terminal in Europe as a hub for feedstocks.

All this activity means a variety of tankers visit the port, delivering raw, crude cargoes, as well as exporting refined cargoes. This is not just undertaken by seagoing ships, but inland shipping plays a key role as well. The main entrance is through the Scheldt-Rhine canal, which leaves the port through the Kanaal Docks to the North and takes traffic into the main European inland canal network. In 2013 51 million tonnes of petroleum and chemical cargoes were carried through the port by inland shipping.

ABOVE Preparing to sail from her berth, the Abou Merhi Lines' vehicle carrier Petra (1985) was built in Japan and operates to ports in the eastern Mediterranean.

ABOVE Horn-Line's specialist ro-ro refrigerated cargo ship Horncliff (1992/12,887gt) discharging fresh fruit for Del Monte.

ABOVE MSC Home Terminal in the Delwaide Dock is MSC's north European hub, with the 8,089TEU 2006-built container ship MSC Vittoria pictured loading there for the Gulf and India.

ABOVE Loaded with empty containers, Chiquita Scandinavia waits to sail from Antwerp in 2013 back to the Caribbean. Built in 1992 at Frederikshavn, Denmark, she now operates as Swedish Reefer for Seatrade.

ABOVE Heading for berths on the left bank, the British dredger Arco Dijk is chased by Maersk Line's 4,405TEU Luna Maersk, inbound from South Africa.

ABOVE CMV's flagship Magellan at Antwerp during a cruise call in June 2015. Cruise ships berth outside the docks on the riverside, close to the city centre.

ABOVE The cargo vessel Red Cedar loading a mixed cargo for Southern African ports on MACS regular service from Europe. Built in 2001, the ship is well-equipped, with two cranes capable of 100 tons lift, and two capable of 50 tons.

ABOVE Entering the Berendrecht Locks, at the northern end of the port, is the 13,798TEU 366m-long container ship MSC Emanuela, one of the largest ships to pass into the port's inner dock system. ANTWERP PORT AUTHORITY

The port is also home to Antwerp Dry Docks. This yard has four dry docks, the largest measuring 312m by 50m. Ships are serviced within the docks, or alongside.

Bulk cargoes are handled in various parts of the port, with no fewer than 12 dedicated bulk terminals, with cargoes ranging from cement and minerals to fertilisers and china clay. Much of the bulk carrier traffic is handled in Amerika Dock and Albert Dock. This part of the port has recently undergone dredging to allow Panamax-sized vessels to be handled, and also accommodates breakbulk ships, including vessels on liner services across the Atlantic and to Africa. Algerian-based CNAN Nord operate a fleet of multipurpose vessels which are often seen loading in this part of the port, on a service which departs from the port three times a month.

Reefers also use this area, with Antwerp priding itself on being the 'number one banana port in the world'. Even though much of the refrigerated trade has shifted to containers over recent years, a handful of specialist reefers still visit on regular services from Caribbean, Central America and West Africa.

The largest ships, carrying ore and coal, are generally handled at the Sea-Invest terminal within the Delwaide Dock, close to the Zandvliet and Berendrect locks. This dock is also home to the MSC Home Terminal. Operated by MSC PSA European Terminal, a joint venture between Singapore's PSA and Terminal Investment Ltd (TIL), the terminal was opened in June 2005 and is Mediterranean Shipping Company's (MSC) hub for Northern Europe.

Many of their container ships can be seen berthed in the dock, and it has handled the latest generation of container ships carrying in excess of 13,000TEU. With the increase in size of vessels, and following the recent alliance with Maersk Line, it was decided to shift the terminal to the tidal dock on the left bank, within the Deurganck Dock, which will give the terminal a capacity of over nine million TEU.

Waasland: a new port

With space running out inside the locks in Antwerp, a new port was built on the opposite bank of the river, entered by a lock at Kallo, construction of which started in 1979. Development of this dock was slow; however, by the 1990s some traffic had moved across the river to the Vrasene and Verrebroek Docks within the Waasland complex.

Today, mixtures of cargoes are handled here, including cars and ro-ro cargoes, forest products, refrigerated cargo and petrochemicals. Another new development is the Deurganckdok Lock, which will open in 2016 at a cost of €340 million. This lock is the same size as the Berendrecht Lock. However, it will be able to accommodate deeper ships, and so will become the largest lock when commissioned. It has been built at the head of the Deurganck Dock.

With direct access to the river Scheldt, it is the largest tidal terminal in the port. This dock saw its first ship in 2005, and will be up to capacity once MSC PSA European Terminal fully moves from the enclosed port. More land has been set aside on the left bank, at the Saeftinge development zone, where a further 1,000 hectares of land has been added to the Waasland complex, including plans for another tidal dock.

River berths

Lying either side of the approach to the Berendrecht and Zandvliet locks are two riverside terminals. Operated by PSA, the Noordzee and Europa Terminals enable ships to be served without having to lock into the docks, which reduces ships' turnaround by about four hours. The Europa terminal, which opened in 1990, is equipped with a ro-ro ramp, enabling the combination ro-ro containerships of ACL to be accommodated. The Noordzee terminal was completed in 1997.

The river berths adjacent to

ANTWERP FACTS	
TOTAL PORT AREA	13,057 hectares
LENGTH OF QUAYS	157km
NUMBER OF LOCKS	6
NUMBER OF DOCKS	48
PORT AUTHORITY EMPLOYEES	1,650
CONTAINERS	8.97 million TEU (2014)
REFINERIES	4
SHIPS VISITING	14,009 (2014)
NO OF INLAND SHIPS VISITED	57,633 (2014)

• Largest petrochemical hub in Europe
• Largest sea-lock in the world (Deurganckdok Lock)

LEFT In Maersk blue, MSC Everest departs the port through the Berendrecht Lock following dry-docking, while the larger MSC Daniela enters the Zandvliet Locks. ANTWERP PORT AUTHORITY

The majority of the port of Antwerp lies to the north of the city on its right bank. The extent of the new terminals on the left bank can clearly be seen. This is where the largest lock in the world will open in 2016. COURTESY OF ANTWERP PORT AUTHORITY

the city are still in use today, although with only minor cargo handling. They are generally used for lay-by, with ships either waiting for cargoes in the docks or having minor repairs completed. Visiting cruise ships berth next to the medieval fortress of Het Steen, allowing passengers to disembark directly into the city. At this part of the river is the Belgian National Maritime Museum, home to many exhibits, including the steam tug *Amical*, dating back to 1914, and the 1959-built inshore minesweeper *Oudenaarde*, both of which sit outside on the quayside.

The Port's own fleet

Antwerp Port Authority operates its own fleet of service craft, including tugs for shiphandling, dredgers, hopper barges and floating cranes. This enables the port to be self-sufficient within the port complex. Tugs, identified only by numbers, guide ships from the locks to the berths.

The most recent tugs were constructed in Spain by UNV. The four tugs, known as the 40 series, of 430gt, were completed in 2012. When out of service, many of the port's fleet can be seen undergoing maintenance at the Kattendijk Dock. From within this dock, the Flandria boat trips operate. This is probably the best way of seeing the port, with 90- or 180-minute trips around the port available, outside the winter months.

While towage within the docks is handled by the Port Authority's tugs, commercial towage companies work the ship towage outside the docks complex, on the river berths and in the locks from the river. Locally-based tug company URS, which can be traced back to 1870, is now part of the Dutch Boskalis group, who also own Smit Towage and operate a fleet of tugs along the Scheldt, has a collection of Voith Schneider and stern-drive tugs stationed at the port. Hamburg-based Fairplay Towage and Multratug, whose offices are located further down the Scheldt at the Dutch port of Terneuzen, operate a cluster of tugs at Antwerp under the Antwerp Towage banner.

The port continues to change, expand and adapt. It has continued to develop since Napoleon commissioned the earliest docks, and today handles the largest container ships in the world. Throughout this time it has embraced the changes to shipping. In September 2015 another milestone was passed, with the bunkering of LNG fuel to the tanker *Sefarina*, the first seagoing ship to receive the fuel within the port, and perhaps a sign of where the port sees the future of shipping. SM

• *Thanks to Antwerp Port Authority.*

Traffic on the Kiel canal is held back if there is a large vessel due through. Such was the case when the 37,949dwt oil/chemical tanker Superba approached the Levenshau Bridge. Operated by Supera Eco Tanker Management of Athens, Greece, she was built in China in 2014 and this was her first visit to Kiel. Measuring 183m by 31m, she was within the maximum measurements for the canal, as she was in ballast, but on her loaded return journey from the Baltic she would be too deep-draughted for the Canal and would have to take the longer route

Maritime Mosaic

A collection of readers' own photographs

Shipping variety on the Kiel Canal • **Over a five-hour period on one day in May 2014, Roy Cressey was fortunate to see a great variety of ships using the Canal, which runs for almost 100km from Brunsbuttel to Kiel Holtenau, linking the North Sea to the Baltic. It was opened on 20 June 1895 by Kaiser Wilhelm II, and has been widened at various times since then.**

German Fleet Auxiliary Vessel Mosel (A512), commissioned in 1993, is a type 404 Elbe class replenishment vessel with a displacement of 3,586 tonnes. One of a class of six named after German rivers, she was on her way to exercises in the North Sea before visiting the Thames.

Wilson is now one of the best-known operators of short sea vessels of between 1,500 and 8,500dwt around Europe, Baltic and the Mediterranean. They operate 110 vessels, of which 83 are owned. The Maltese-flagged Wilson Almeria (2010/2,451gt) is time-chartered by Wilson, being owned by Bojen Reederei of Germany. Built in Komarno, Slovakia, the 3,586dwt vessel is seen heading for the Baltic through the Canal's tranquil waters.

LEFT The 3,718dwt general cargo vessel Lady Anneke (2012/2,544gt) passes Suchsdorf on her way from the Baltic to the UK with a bulk cargo. She was built by Groningen Shipyard at Waterhuizen, Netherlands and is operated by Wijnne & Barends of Delfzijl. She is a frequent visitor to Humber and Trent ports.

BELOW The paddle steamer Freya was built in 1905 by J. & K. Smit, Kinderdijk, Netherlands for service out of Vlissingen as Westerschelde. She was sold to the De Klok shipyard at Terneuzen in 1933, and in 1935 was used as a bunkering station by Mr Zwaans of Oosterhout. In 1989, after she was bought by Mr Klemens Key, restoration started at Zaandam, and a second-hand compound steam engine from 1926 and a boiler from 1967 were installed. In 1990 she was in service as De Nederlander operating charters around Rotterdam docks. Sold in December 1999 to Insel und Hallig Reederei Company, she now operates services on the Kiel Canal.

ABOVE Many container feeder vessels transit the canal, and the Liberian-flagged E. R. Riga is a regular canal visitor, on routes linking ports such as Rotterdam and Zeebrugge with St Petersburg. Built in China in 2010 as Leguan, the 14,236dwt vessel took her current name in 2012 and is owned by E. R. Schiffahrt of Hamburg.

Malta's classic callers

On 30 September 2015 seven cruise ships visited Malta, calling at Valetta, which has always been a popular port for Mediterranean cruising. This trip down memory lane by Valletta-based ship photographer Gaetano Spiteri recalls some of the old-timers that visited the port two decades ago and more.

The port of Valletta, Malta's capital, has always been a popular destination for cruise ships in the Mediterranean. The visit of seven cruise ships on one day at the end of September 2015 shows it remains undiminished in popularity from the post-war days of cruising, when famous liners converted for cruising were regular callers.

Ships calling at Valletta offer their passengers history and sights in abundance, starting with the spectacular Grand Harbour, which is surrounded by fortified cities and bastions, providing the visitor arriving by ship with amazing scenery.

Valletta Waterfront is the gateway to the city, while the port, one of the busiest in the Med, welcomes more than half a million cruise passengers a year. Most cruise ships now dock at Valletta Cruise Port but, because Malta is so popular, some visiting ships have to berth at the new Senglea Boiler Wharf.

ABOVE Achille Lauro (1947, ex-Willem Ruys) at Valletta, Malta in the early 1990s. She sunk off Somalia after a fire on board on 2 December 1994.

One of the best-known of the classic cruise ships was Canberra, built in 1961 by Harland & Wolff, and renowned for her role in the 1982 Falklands War. She was scrapped in Pakistan in 1997 and is pictured leaving Grand Harbour, Valletta in the late 1980s.

ABOVE Baltica (16,531gt) was built by Harland & Wolff, Belfast in 1954 as the fast cargo liner Port Melbourne. She later became Therisos Express (1972), Danae (1974 and 1992), Starlight Princess (1992), Anar (1992), Starlight Princess (1992), Baltica (1994) and Princess Danae (1996), and is pictured in Malta in 1995. In 2013 she became Lisboa, owned by Portuscale Cruises, but in 2015 went to Aliaga for breaking.

RIGHT Enrico Costa was built in 1951 as Provence for French SGTM. Between 1962 and 1965 she was chartered to Costa Line and in 1965 was sold to Costa, being renamed Enrico C until 1987, when she became Enrico Costa. She also carried the names Symphony, Aegean Spirit and Ocean Glory 1, and is pictured in the early 1990s at Valletta. In 2001 she went to Alang for scrap.

ABOVE Fedor Shalyapin was built by John Brown & Company at Clydebank in 1954 as Cunard's Ivernia. The 21,717grt liner was launched on 14 December 1954 for the Liverpool to Canada service. On 1 July 1955 she left Greenock on her maiden voyage to Montreal, returning to homeport at Liverpool. In 1957 she was transferred to Southampton and sailed both to New York and Canada. She was converted into the cruise ship Franconia prior to being sold in 1973 to the Black Sea Shipping Company, who renamed her Fedor Shalyapin and used her for cruising in the Caribbean and in Europe until 2004, when she was sold to be broken up at Alang.

ABOVE Leonid Sobinov was built in 1954 as the British passenger liner Saxonia (21,637gt) by John Brown & Company at Clydebank, for Cunard's Liverpool-Montreal service. She was the first of four almost identical sisterships built by Browns between 1954 and 1957 for UK-Montreal service. In August 1973 she was bought by the Soviet Union's Black Sea Shipping Company and renamed Leonid Sobinov, as which she served until being laid up in 1995. She was scrapped in 1999 at Alang.

RIGHT Salamis Glory (10,392gt) was built as Anna Nery in 1962 and enjoyed a varied career. After 1968 she was used for coastal shipping, transatlantic crossings and, during the summer, cruising. In 1978 she was sold to Hellenic Cruises and renamed Danaos, becoming Constellation in 1982. In 1987 the company went bankrupt, and the ship spent four years out of service. In 1992 she was sold and renamed Morning Star, before another sale and another renaming, becoming Regency Spirit for Regency Cruises. This lasted until 1995, when Regency Cruises went bankrupt, and the ship was seized while in Nice. In 1996 she was sold to Salamis Cruises and became Salamis Glory, being rebuilt in 2000. In December 2009 Salamis Glory was sold for scrapping and left for Alang.

ABOVE The unusual Radisson Diamond (20,295gt) was the largest ship with a SWATH design, and the only twin-hull cruise ship ever built. She was built by Rauma Finnyards in 1991 and served as Radisson Diamond until 2005, becoming Asia Star and, since 2012, China Star, operating as the first ship for the new cruise line China Cruises Company Limited.

ABOVE Orient Express was built in 1975 as the ferry Bore Star by Dubigeon-Normandie, France, one of three sisterships for Silja Line services. She became Silja Star in 1980 and has had a series of names since, visiting Valetta as Orient Express in June 1990. She later service with the Academy of Maritime Education and Training in Chennai, India, but was broken up at Alang in 2013.

ABOVE Vasco da Gama was built in 1961 in Belgium as Infante Dom Henrique (23,306gt), then Portugal's largest liner. In her 42 years of service she had her name changed twice, in 1988 to Vasco de Gama and in 1991 to SeaWind Crown. In 2002 she was laid up in Barcelona and in 2004 sailed to Alang for scrapping.

LEFT Serenade (12,460gt), pictured in 1990, was built as Jean Mermoz in 1958 for Compagnie de Navigation Fraissinet. She was rebuilt in 1969-70 as Mermoz, and in 1993 was bought by Costa Cruises, but retained her name even after Carnival bought Costa in 1996. In 1999 Carnival sold Mermoz to Louis Cruises and she became Serenade. In 2008 she was renamed Serena and sailed to Alang for scrapping.

BELOW Vistafjord was built in 1973 by Swan Hunter for Norwegian America Line. In 1983 she was sold to Cunard and, in 1999, after a major refit, was renamed Caronia. In 2004 she was sold to Saga Cruises and became Saga Ruby, undergoing a major refit in Malta in 2005. In 2014 she was sold to a Singapore-registered company with a view to converting her as a Floating Hotel in Burma. In February 2014 left Gibraltar under the name Oasia. She is pictured in her original Norwegian America Line livery in the early 1980s.

Cal Mac captains

Nicholas Leach meets three captains on three very different Caledonian MacBrayne ferries operating on lifeline services around the Outer Hebrides.

Loch Alainn • Barra–Eriskay

Captain Donald Rodgers has been with Caledonian MacBrayne since 2002 and has worked mainly on the short route between Barra, the most southerly of the islands that make up the Outer Hebrides, and Eriskay. He lives in Eriskay and worked on the council-run ferry linking Eriskay with South Uist before the causeway was built. Before that he worked as a fisherman, obtaining his seaman's ticket then.

The small 396gt ferry *Loch Alainn* was built in 1997 and entered service in July that year on the Colintraive to Rhubodach route. She was intended for the Fishnish-Lochaline crossing, but proved unsuitable for this and was moved to Largs in 1998, becoming the main Cumbrae vessel until 2007. Since then she has been the dedicated Sound of Barra ferry, replacing *Loch Bhrusda* on this increasingly busy route.

The ship continues to sail in 50 to 60mph winds, which affect the ship depending on their direction, and Captain Rodgers says she rarely misses a crossing. He then explains the working routine: 'Four crew operate the vessel, and we make our first crossing at 0700, completing five runs a day, with a break in the afternoon. We finish and tie up at about 1930.' He enjoys the work, adding: 'We have a good view from the office up here [on the bridge]. We see basking sharks, seals and dolphins all year.'

Loch Alainn has proved ideal for the Sound of Barra, as she is easily manoeuvrable, being driven by Voith Schneider propulsion units, which give her a top speed of over nine knots, though generally the crossing is undertaken at seven knots.

ABOVE The 150-passenger Loch Alainn on the Sound of Barra crossing.

RIGHT Loch Alainn can take up to 20 cars.

BELOW Master of Loch Alainn, Donald Rodgers, guides his vessel between Barra and Eriskay using joysticks to control the Voith Schneider drives.

Hebrides • Tarbert–Uig

The ferry *Hebrides* operates on the 'Uig triangle' (Uig-Tarbert-Lochmaddy) and is the third vessel of the name to serve the Cal Mac fleet. Built by Ferguson Shipbuilders, Port Glasgow in 2000, she entered service in 2001, and her service speed of 16.5 knots keeps the crossing times to around 100 minutes and allows three return trips a day. She can carry 612 passengers and 90 cars, and has a mezzanine car deck for use during the extra-busy periods.

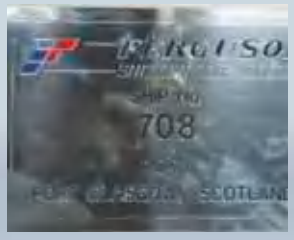
On the bridge, Captain Iain Elliott oversees operations, having spent 20 years with Cal Mac. He started his seafaring career in 1974 with Harrison's Clyde Ltd, working on deepsea bulk carriers. After two years in the coastal trade, he spent eight years on supply and standby ships, mainly in the North Sea, but did not like it, and so left in 1995. He recalls: 'My last one was a pipe-laying barge out in China. But from there I joined Cal Mac in 1995 on one of the the Clyde routes, working on *Pioneer* as second officer.'

After working on the Clyde for several years, he moved to the Western Isles and spent two years relieving on various ships, until in 2004 he moved to *Hebridean Isles*, spending seven years as chief officer on her. In August 2008 he came to *Hebrides*, and has been on her ever since. He explains the ship's operations:

'We usually cover the Uig triangle, but we occasionally go to Arran and work out of Oban, then back up here after dry-docking. In the winter we do the triangle, but in the summer we usually go back and forth to Uig and the other ports. Summertime is very busy, with the ship full of tourists mostly, although we carry much of the commercial traffic to the Uists, with a dozen lorries going to Lochmaddy every day.

'We start at 0530 and finish at 2025 at Lochmaddy, but each day is different. The crew of 34 live on board, working a two weeks on/two weeks off rota. The ship mainly carries car traffic, with few foot passengers, as the only way without a car is by bus from Glasgow, which takes forever. We usually carry 300 passengers but have the capacity for 600.'

ABOVE Captain Iain Elliott on the bridge of Hebrides.



ABOVE Hebrides' builder's plaque.

ABOVE Sign on board Hebrides.

Loch Portain • Berneray–Leverburgh

The service from Berneray to Leverburgh across the Sound of Harris started in 1996, using the then new *Loch Bhrusda*, but it soon became apparent that a new vessel was required. Built by McTay Marine on the Mersey, the new ferry was named *Loch Portain* on 23 April 2003 and undertook sea trials before arriving in North Uist on 1 June, and she has been on the route ever since.

On the bridge is Captain John Angus Henderson, who has been with Cal Mac for almost a decade and is in the pool of masters travelling up and down the network on the different routes. He explains: 'On this route it is two weeks on and two weeks off. I cover holiday relief and sickness in the summer, and dry-docking and shifting ships during the winter. On this route, we make four crossings a day and three on a Sunday.'

He was on the North Sea before coming to Cal Mac, working for a number of different companies on supply ships, but says: 'Cal Mac are great to work for – I have the best job in my home environment. I live in Port of Ness at the north end of Lewis, and so am very familiar with these waters.'

The Sound of Harris crossing can be particularly challenging as there are 21 changes of course between Berneray and Leverburgh, and the ship does not operate in the dark or the fog because there are too many course changes. In winter, when the weather can be very bad indeed, there are fewer crossings, and Captain Henderson says he is 'constantly studying the weather forecast'. During certain tidal conditions, the odd sailing has to be postponed because there is not enough water when berthing.

Loch Portain, with space for more than 30 cars, carries twice as many vehicles as *Loch Bhrusda* did, as well as more passengers. She has proved to be more stable in heavier seas and also significantly quieter than her predecessor, and the route has proved far more popular than predicted.

ABOVE Captain John Angus Henderson at the controls of Loch Portain. He and the other four crew start with a crossing from Berneray at 0715, with four return crossings each day. The Schottel water-jet propulsion system is ideal for the shallow water navigated through on the route.

BELOW The view from the bridge as Loch Portain approaches Leverburgh.

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letter of the month

The Liberty ships

Following Campbell McCutcheon's article on Liberty Ships (SM, Sept 2015), I enjoyed reading the letters from both William Jory and David Aris (SM, Ships Mail, Nov 2015). I am pleased that there is still enough interest in the standard-built merchant ships of World War II to generate such articles and comment. I write concerning some of the points raised in the letter from Mr Jory.

In September 1940 it was Cyril Thompson, of Sunderland shipbuilders J. L. Thompson & Sons, who led the group known as The British Shipbuilding Mission to the United States. Thompson presented to Admiral Emory Scott Land, Chairman of the United States Maritime Commission, plans based on Dorington Court, a vessel delivered from the Thompson yard in 1939. Simplified drawings from the Dorington Court plans were already being used by J. L. Thompson for the construction of early Empire ships, such as Empire Wind and Empire Liberty. In those dark days, American industry was desperately needed to help stem Britain's ever-increasing shipping losses.

From this British initiative came the 60 ships of the Ocean type, the first being Ocean Vanguard, delivered at Richmond, California in October 1941. In the United States, further simplification of the British plans led to the delivery of the first Liberty Ship, Patrick Henry, just two months later.

Mr Jory refers to 'the Liberty ships and their British counterparts, the Victory Ships'. This is not correct. Although there were 11 Canadian war-built Park type vessels that were sometimes referred to as the 'Victory type' within their building programme, all carried the 'Park' suffix to their names and they were built to the usual Park/Fort type layout with a split superstructure, and were certainly not Victory Ships.

The design of the Victory ships that Mr Jory refers to came from the evolution of earlier US Maritime Commission designs, going back to the C1 type. In 1943, during the late stages of their design, it would be fair to say that the American naval architects charged with the task were aware of and impressed by a small class of British-built Empire cargo vessels, referred to as the 'Standard Fast Type'. The first of these ships was Empire Chieftain, delivered in 1943, which later became Royal Mail Line's Loch Ryan. There is, however, no direct link between these British vessels and the US Maritime Commission's Victory ships. Delivered from the Portland yard of the Oregon Shipbuilding Corp on 28 February 1944, the first Victory Ship, United Victory, and all those that followed, were as American as the 4th of July.

I would suggest that the historical and most lovely photo supplied by Mr Jory shows the young lady, who would one day become his wife, sitting in on the launch of a Liberty rather than a Victory ship.

Victor Young
Wellington
New Zealand

ABOVE Cyril Thompson of Sunderland shipbuilders J. L. Thompson & Sons, seen here with a model of the Empire Liberty, headed the British Shipbuilding Mission that delivered the simplified plans of the Dorington Court to the United States.

Campania clarifications

Regarding the article on Campania (SM, Sept 2015), I have two questions (both relating to p.53): Campania is cited as being the first 'to have wireless communications with coastal stations around the world'. Does this mean other vessels, such as Kaiser Wilhelm der Grösse (which had wireless installed in 1900), could only communicate with other ships at this point? And likewise for Beaver Line's Lake Champlain, cited by some sources as being the first to have permanent wireless installed in 1901.

Regarding the collision with Embleton, the article says it occurred 'three years later', the most recent year cited (in the previous paragraph) being 1901, meaning it happened in 1904. However, other sources say it occurred in 1900, which squares with the second-removed year of 1897.

Peter Dawes, Canada

The author responded as follows:
The easiest thing to clarify is that the collision with Embleton was on 21 July 1900. I am not an expert on wireless technology, but there are several sources that cite Campania as being the first to have 'permanent wireless radio communications with coastal stations', which, as far as I can ascertain, meant that any messages sent by her could be relayed to other stations across Europe and America.

Other sources state that in 1904 Marconi entered into an agreement with Cunard Steamship Line to create a civilian ship-to-shore communication system, which ties in with the 1905 date I referred to in the article.

Both of the other ships referred to by Peter Dawes did, as he quite rightly points out, have wireless technology installed prior to this. It would be interesting to hear from other readers who may be more qualified to comment on wireless matters.

James Hendrie
Livingston, West Lothian

Thanks for the memory

I was looking through some magazines when I spotted Ships Monthly, and what really caught my eye was the Coals from Newcastle article (SM, Oct 2015). I immediately recognised the accompanying photo of a Flat Iron and was transported back 56 years to when I was 11 years of age.

At that time I lived in Bridlington and my grandparents lived in Flamborough, where my grandfather, father and many uncles were fishermen working small cobles out of North and South Landings, either side of Flamborough Head. My spare time was spent on the cliffs watching colliers, coasters and large deep-sea freighters travelling on the North Sea.

I was fascinated by the numbers of ships passing the headland every day. As I got older, my grandfather introduced me to the Coastguards, who let me spend hours with them as they worked six-hour shifts in a small look-out building on the cliff tops.

Beside their normal watch-keeping duties, they would send regular weather reports, keep an eye out for the safety of holiday-makers, and signal every ship that passed the headland using Morse code and a signal lamp. The ships would reply with their name, destination and last port of call. This information was then entered by the Coastguard officer into a log book as a record in case a ship went missing before it reached the next Coastguard station. In the case of a ship going south, it would be Spurn Point. Northbound ships would go through the same procedure as they passed Whitby. I learned to use a 21-inch Aldis lamp during my school holidays.

Most of the ships were colliers belonging to the many different power companies or shipmanaging companies, such as Stephenson Clarkes, Corry and Everards, fully laden going south and in ballast going north. When in ballast, those Flat Irons made heavy going in rough weather, and through the large naval binoculars I could see their screws thrashing about as their sterns came out of the water.

I did not realise it at the time, but I was watching history in the making, as those ships and the men who sailed in them have all ceased trading. The Coastguard look-out has also gone.

Patrick Major
Huddersfield

Antwerp dock names

The photo taken in the port of Antwerp (SM, Oct), which shows MSC Lieselotte, incorrectly identifies the location, which is not the Delwedok. The correct name of this dock is Delwaide, so-called after a former mayor of Antwerp.

Frans Truyens
Belgium

Mystery identified

I enjoyed reading Alistair Deayton's history of the former Japanese ferry Central No.3, later El Djezair and finally Cleopatra 1, identified as the September Mystery Ship. Unfortunately, the ship depicted in the photograph was Shahd Cleopatra, which had a similar career, but was not Central No.3/El Djezair, as stated.

Previously named Hoggar, she was built as the Japanese ferry Hibiscus and was operated by the short-lived Central Ferry Company of Japan, which had five ferries built for the Kawasaki-Kobe route, of three slightly different designs, but all characterised by twin side-by-side funnels.

When the Central Company became bankrupt, their ships were sold during 1972-73. Two became Candia and Rethimnon of the Cretan Maritime Co ANEK, two went to the Algerians and were renamed Tassili and El Djezair, and another was transferred within Japan. The image of El Djezair, taken from a slide by Phil Cone in August 1988 at Marseilles, shows the differences from the mystery ship.

In the period of rapid expansion of Japanese ferry operations, the Nippon Car Ferry Co and related Miyazaki Car Ferry had their own series of six near-identical sisters completed in 1971 for their long-distance route between Kawasaki and Hyuga (on Kyushu). They carried around 1,000 passengers and 110 cars or 40 trucks and were mostly named after flowering shrubs, such as Hibiscus (5,958gt), built at Kobe.

Phenix, Bougainvillea and Hibiscus were sold in the mid-1970s to become Tipaza, Zeralda and Hoggar respectively for CNAN, who

immediately added a bank of lifeboats to the original design. I have also seen photographs which suggest that ENTMV subsequently added the new accommodation block, which effectively extended the boat deck to full length aft.

Hoggar followed El Djezair to Cleopatra Navigation in 2006 and became Shahd Cleopatra, while Zeralda became Cleopatra Moon. Neither ship seems to have operated for long and both may well have been laid up in 2007. They were both anchored in Suez Roads during 2009 and there are photographs on the internet of Shahd Cleopatra which suggest she was still there in 2011.

Roland Whaite
Chepstow

ABOVE A model of SMS Temes at the Museum of Military History in Vienna. It was from this Danube monitor that Fregattenkapitän Friedrich Grund gave the order to open fire, thus firing the first shots of World War I.

Venus captured

In answer to the question from R. Polwarth (SM, Oct 2015), I can confirm that Venus (1931) was captured by the Germans during World War II. The plan for her was that she could be used as a mother ship for German submarines. In April 1945 she was bombed during a raid against Hamburg. She was sunk, but was soon taken to Helsingør shipyard for repair. She was redelivered to Bergen Line in May 1948.

Kurt Inge Haugstvedt
Norway

Austrian Navy and WWI

With reference to your article on the Austro-Hungarian navy (SM, Oct 2015), I would like to add that the director of the Museum of Military History in Vienna, Professor Manfried Rauchensteiner, stated in his excellent book 'World War One and the End of the Habsburg-Monarchy', that three monitors of the k.u.k.Danube-flotilla actually fired the opening shots of World War I. He describes how, at 0220 on 29 July 1914, the monitors Temes, Bodrog and Számos opened up with their 12cm-guns on the Serbian capital Belgrade, which was then situated on the border with the Hungarian part of the Habsburg Empire.

The Serbians returned fire from a fortification on an island fittingly called Great Island of War (Grosse Kriegsinsel). Prof Rauchensteiner writes: 'The Great War was unleashed at the Great Island of War. . . But, unlike the small damage these 12cm-shells did, the millions more that were to follow them destroyed the Old Europe.'

Francis Wagner
Luxembourg

Cunarder lives lost

I was surprised to read that five passengers lost their lives on the Campania in 1905 (SM, Sept), the result of a large wave sweeping the ship. I was always under the impression that Cunard had never lost a passenger in peacetime.

David Shore
Richmond, BC
Canada

Seaham has seven – not five – a day

Seaham Harbour's five-a-day is by no means 'hitherto unknown' (SM, Nov 2015), as the attached photographs taken in 1998 show. One photograph shows seven ships, comprising one grab dredger and six coasters, working cargo. The other photo (above) shows five coasters, also taken in 1998. During the limestone 'season', when large quantities of the cargo were exported from the port, it was common to see five or more ships in port. Thank you for a most informative magazine.

Ronald Henderson
Washington, Tyne & Wear

chartroom

January ports of call

Compiled by Donna and Andrew Cooke

Date	Arr/dep	Ship	From/to	Flag	Operator	GT
SOUTHAMPTON						
2	0630/1630	Aurora	Caribbean	BA	P&O	76,152
2	x / x	Ventura	Canary Islands	BA	P&O	116,017
3	0630/1630	Queen Victoria	Zeebrugge/Northern Europe	BA	Cunard	90,049
4	x / x	Oceana	Caribbean/ x	BA	P&O	77,499
5	x / x	Boudicca	World cruise	BA	Fred. Oslen	28,551
5	x / x	Balmoral	Tenerife/ x	BA	Fred. Olsen	43,537
6	x / x	Oriana	USA/Caribbean	BA	P&O	69,840
6	x / x	Queen Elizabeth	Canary Islands/Hamburg	BA	Cunard	90,901
8	x / x	Black Watch	World cruise	BA	Fred. Olsen	28,613
10	x / x	Queen Elizabeth	Hamburg/World Cruise	BA	Cunard	90,901
10	0630/1630	Queen Victoria	Northern Europe/Hamburg	BA	Cunard	90,049
10	x / x	Queen Mary 2	New York/ x	BA	Cunard	148,528
11	0630/1630	Arcadia	Atlantic Islands & Brazil	BA	P&O	83,342
16	0630/1630	Ventura	Canary Islands/Western Europe	BA	P&O	116,017
18	0630/1630	Ventura	Western Europe/Caribbean	BA	P&O	116,017
19	0630/1630	Balmoral	World cruise/ x	BA	Fred. Olsen	43,537
BRISTOL (AVONMOUTH)						
5	1130/2200	Marco Polo	x /La Coruna	BA	CMV	22,080
TILBURY						
4	0700/1700	Boudicca	Lisbon/ x	BA	Fred. Oslen	28,551
5	1400/2000	Magellan	Amsterdam	BA	CMV	46,052
LIVERPOOL						
5	x / x	Black Watch	Madeira/ x	BA	Fred. Olsen	28,613

FLAG CODES BA Bermuda **NOTES** x details not known

NB The information in this table is given in good faith, but might change and Ships Monthly cannot be held responsible for any changes to ship arrivals that may occur

The Mystery Ship

This month's mystery ship is a warship, which is flying the Japanese flag and dates from the pre-1939 era. But can any reader accurately identify which ship it actually is, and provide further information, such as year of build and builder? What kind of warship was she, and did she see any active service? Did she survive her conflicts, and what was her ultimate fate?

• Send answers, including a postal address, by email to sm.ed@kelsey.co.uk, or by post to Mystery Ship, Ships Monthly, Kelsey Publishing, Cudham Tithe Barn, Berrys Hill, Cudham, Kent TN16 3AG. Emails preferred.

November's mystery ship . . . remains a mystery

For the first time, no reader could identify the mystery ships, and so the paddlers featured in the photo published in the November 2016 issue, above left, remain unknown, as does the location. However, if any eagle-eyed reader can say anything about the photo, could they please contact Ships Monthly.

So instead of an answer, there is another Mystery, and this from a postcard sent in by Peter Dawes, from Canada, who says: 'I'm not certain, but I believe it shows one of Cunard's six A class vessels, these serving Montreal from the early 1920s to 1939. However, if this is a Cunarder, the funnel colours should be the traditional red with black stripes and a black top, while this one has blue where the red should be. As far as I know, no other line operating on the St Lawrence at this time sported blue on their funnels. I wonder if a mistake was made when the postcard was coloured. Perhaps readers could identify the vessel?'

ships library

book of the month

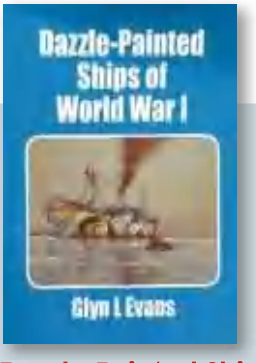
Ferries 2016
Compiled by Nick Widdows

Published by Ferry Publications, PO Box 33, Ramsey, Isle of Man IM99 4LP; tel 01624 898445, info@lilypublications.co.uk, 224-page softback, price £18.50 plus postage.

Compiled by Nick Widdows, this annual publication lists every passenger/vehicle ferry in the United Kingdom and Ireland: ro-ro freight vessels which operate regular services between Britain and Ireland and to nearby Continental destinations, and major passenger/vehicle ferries in other parts of Northern Europe. This is the 28th edition of the book, which first appeared in 1983 and is an essential companion for ferry enthusiasts, containing over 180 photographs in its 218 pages.

This edition includes a foreword by Irish Ferries' Managing Director Andrew Sheen, and has a major article about the history of Irish Ferries and its perspective on the Central Corridor route from Holyhead to Dublin, with details of the ferries operated by the company. Another feature article looks at Condor Liberation, which is the first new ferry to enter service on the English Channel in three years, and the articles conclude with a review of the 2013-14 ferry scene area by area.

The bulk of the book is taken up with entries for individual ferry companies, with information about the routes they operate as well as their fleets, and covers not only Britain and Ireland but also Northern Europe and Scandinavia.



Dazzle-Painted Ships of World War I
Glyn L. Evans

Against a background of the U-boat menace, the famous artist Lieutenant N. Wilkinson RNVR put his Dazzle Paint Scheme to the Admiralty in April 1917. In this book, Glyn L. Evans explains the process that led to the introduction of Dazzle painting, how and by whom the ships were painted, and the international reaction to them.

Dazzle paint schemes were applied to all kinds of vessels, from the liner Mauretania at just over 31,000grt to smaller liners, merchant ships and coasters at 500grt, all giving artists the largest canvas of their careers upon which to work. All kinds of impressive patterns of diamonds and stripes were employed.

This small volume examines how the idea of painting ships in a Dazzle scheme came about, explains the difference between camouflage and dazzle, and how the Admiralty adopted the idea, albeit with some reluctance. This interesting and informative book, with its unusual illustrations, looks at a subject about which little has been written hitherto, and deserves a place on ship enthusiasts' bookshelves. NL

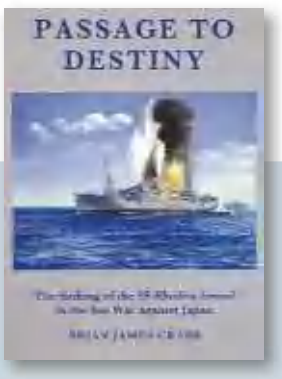
• Published by Coastal Shipping Publications, 400 Nore Road, Portishead, Bristol BS20 8EZ, bernard@coastalshipping.co.uk, tel 01275 846178, 76 pages, £9.95 plus £1 postage.

Coast Lines: Fleet List and History
Ian Collard

Coast Lines was formed in 1913 from the merger of three Liverpool coaster companies and grew to be the largest coaster company in the world, although it was largely based around the west coast until after World War II. Through much of the period of its existence, coastal trading was in decline, which made the group's many takeovers easier to arrange. At its peak, it dominated west coast trading, running most of the area's ferry routes, apart from those to the Isle of Man, growing from operating a small fleet of 16 coastal ships to a position of dominance in the coastal trade.

Coast Lines was eventually taken over by P&O in 1971, by which time the fleet had declined from 110 passenger and cargo vessels in 1955 to just 25. This book provides a history of the fleet's development, and then a iisting of the vessels that were operated, with potted histories and numerous photos of those ships. JM

• Published by Amberley Publishing, The Hill, Stroud, Gloucestershire GL5 4EP, tel 01453 847800, www.amberley-books.com, 128 pages, 256 illustrations, price £19.99.

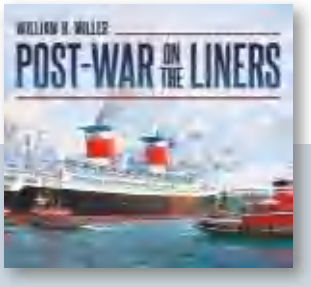


Passage to Destiny
Brian James Crabb

This book tells the story of the loss of the troopship Khedive Ismail in convoy KR8 in February 1944. No fewer than 1,296 people lost their lives in less than two minutes when the ship sank. This included 27 women, the single worst loss of female personnel in the history of the British Empire.

Carrying 1,511 personnel from the Army and the Royal and Merchant Navies, Khedive Ismail was torpedoed by the Japanese submarine I-27 in the Indian Ocean. Only 209 men and six women survived the tragic incident. This book provides a detailed account of the sinking, with a history of the ship herself, appendices listing all of those on board at the time of the sinking, and a detailed account of the subsequent inquiries. EF

• Published by Shaun Tyas, and available from the author at 24 Exeter Road, Portishead, Bristol BS20 6YF, tel 01275 844229, 212 pages, price £24.



Post-war on the Liners
William H. Miller

The period from the end of World War II to the late 1960s marked a golden era for the traditional port-to-port class-divided passenger ship business, with the wealthy and adventurous seeking new experiences and migrants wanting to leave Europe for new lives and opportunities overseas.

Atlantic crossings were popular, but there were also three- and four-class ships to South America, fast mail ships to South Africa, colonial passenger vessels to East Africa, and migrant sailings to Sydney. This was an era when long-distance travel was entirely dependent on the ocean liners.

This book describes the many passenger ship services of the era, from the Cunarders Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth, Italian Line's Augustus, Union-Castle's Bloemfontein Castle, P&O's Oronsay, and Shaw Savill's Southern Cross, to lesser-known ships such as Fyffes Line's Golfito, Royal Mail's Amazon, Sitmar Line's Fairsea, and NYK Line's Hikawa Maru. NL

• Published by Fonthill Media, Millview, Toadsmoor Road, Stroud GL5 2TB, www.fonthillmedia.com, 96 pages, price £18.99.

next issue

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US Navy frigates
A look at the Oliver Hazard Perry class frigates have been at the forefront of US Navy policy since the mid-1970s, and only now, four decades since their introduction, are they disappearing from the US Navy's fleet.

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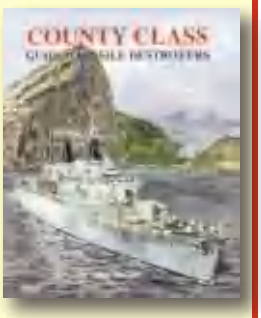

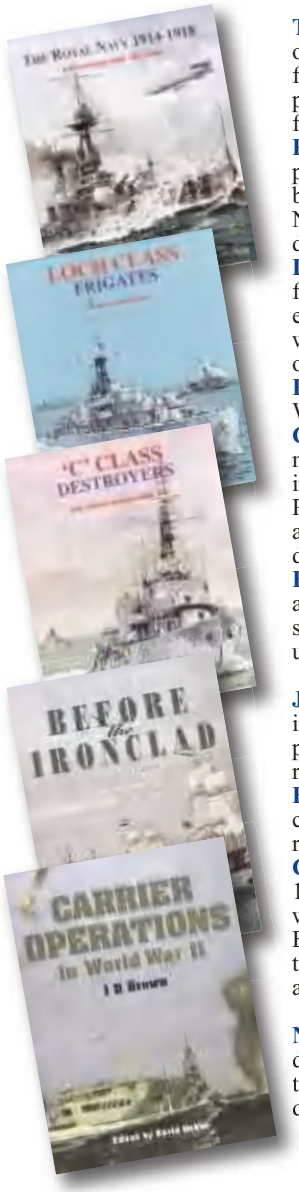

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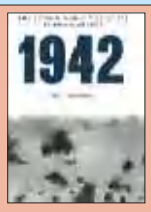

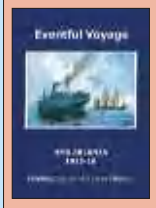

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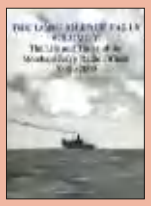

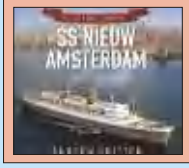

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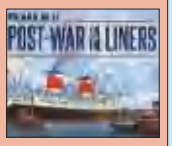

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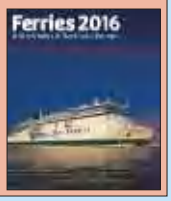

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